Toyota, Honda assure GMA of more investments

STORY ON PAGE A2

GMA faces Pulag curse

By the PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

'WAG SANANG MAGALIT ANG MGA DIWATA

BAGUIO CITY—First the good news: When President Macapagal-Arroyo climbs Mt. Pulag next month, she will be the first such official to do so.

Now the bad news: Given the

GMA/A11

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House investigates backdoor negotiator

Gov't-MILF agreements questioned, opposed

By Juliet L. Javellana
in Manila
and Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE MAN who concluded "confidence-building" agreements with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front early this month did not himself lack confidence when he faced down a crowd of skeptical congressmen yesterday.

Presidential adviser Norberto Gonzales asserted during the four-hour hearing of the House defense committee that the agreements he signed did not return the 45 camps recovered by the military in 2000 to the MILF. He also said he had full powers from President Macapagal-Arroyo to conduct "back-channel" negotiations with the MILF.

He also stressed that the agreements he signed were interim agreements meant as confidence-building measures for the forging of a final peace treaty with the MILF.

Gonzales signed a "joint communiqué" on May 6 and "implementing guidelines" on May 7.

To those who opposed him as backdoor negotiator because he did not hail from Mindanao, and was not a member of the peace panel, Gonzales said he knew the MNLF rebels "by the palm of my hands."

"I don't want it to appear that the President appointed a charlatan," Gonzales said.

Asked pointblank by House defense committee chair Rep. Prospero Pichay of Surigao del Sur if he would have approved

HOUSE/A17

"THE BACK-CHANNEL" negotiator with the MILF, Norberto Gonzales (third from left with Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita), is on the frontline at the House hearings of the defense committee on Wednesday. AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Roy Cimatu and Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes testify that Gonzales did not consult them.

DENNIS SABANGAN

Agreements raise disturbing concerns

By Manny Piñol
Governor of Cotabato

COMMENTARY

TWO crucial agreements with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front entered into by Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns Norberto Gonzales early this month raise troubling questions.

Why was the official peace panel not involved? Why did the government implicitly acknowledge that MILF rebels are still in control of territories within the Republic?

Why did the government agree to pay "reparation," implying that the insurgent group was the wronged party instead of the sovereign nation?

At first glance, the agreements look like the first drop of rain in May after a long and scorching summer of uncertainty in the country's search for a peaceful settlement of the MILF problem.

On May 6, Gonzales representing the Philippine government and Lanang Ali representing the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signed a "joint communiqué" in Cyberjaya, Malaysia. Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita and MILF vice

AGREEMENTS/A17

P5M of each solon's pork to be spent for El Niño

By Juliet L. Javellana

AS IF to tell senators that pork barrel can be put to good use, members of the House of Representatives are forking out P5 million each from their pork allocation to help farmers battle El Niño, a weather phenomenon associated with drought.

A former official of the Ramos administration, however, scoffed at such political gimmick. Legislators had no right to a pork barrel, ex-Defense Secretary Fortunato Abat said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said the P1-billion "anti-El Niño fund" would be used to build shallow tube wells, small water-impounding structures, small irrigation canals, farm-to-market roads, post-harvest facilities and warehouses in drought-affected areas.

De Venecia said he had asked Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin to immediately release the funds.

Months before the onset of El Niño, drought already destroyed at least P392 million worth of crops in the country, according to the Department of Agriculture. El Niño is forecast to be felt in the middle of the year up to early 2003.

In 1997-1998, El Niño hit the country hard. Agriculture production dropped 6.6 percent in 1998.

P5M/A17

Bongbong on witness: All talk

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—"It's the same story they are trying to sell again."

That was the reaction of Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to the new revelations by "Madame Z" on the alleged cover-up by Switzerland and Liechtenstein authorities involving Marcos assets in Switzerland.

Although Philippine authorities know about "Madame Z," a Canadian-Welsh lawyer who used to work for Credit Suisse, her identity remains a "mystery" to the Marcos family, Marcos said.

In a special report, the INQUIRER said that Madame Z had

BONGBONG/A17

Malacañang still clueless on Luzon blackout

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan
and Ronnel W. Domingo

MALACAÑANG is still unclear on the "root cause" of Tuesday's Luzon-wide blackout despite the explanation of the National Power Corp.

President Macapagal-Arroyo expects to get a full report from Napocor and the Manila Electric Co. when she returns from Japan on Saturday, acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable Jr. said yesterday.

"At this point, it's not very definite and clear what has been the cause of this blackout. We know it's tripping of the line. But we really don't know the root cause," Afable said by phone from Tokyo.

But the President is satisfied that the blackout was caused by a "technical problem" and was not an act of sabotage, he said.

At a press briefing yesterday, both Napocor and Meralco admitted responsibility for the blackout, the fourth in 12 months and the second this year.

Officials of the two firms said they would conduct a joint investigation to determine the cause of the transmission line tripping that triggered the blackout. They said they expected to announce preliminary findings tomorrow.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. had said the outage—which forced the Philippine Stock Exchange to call off afternoon trading and stopped work in factories and other business establishments—was caused by a breakdown in the Biñan-Sta. Rosa power plant. It eventually

MALACAÑANG/A9

AT A BREAKFAST hosted by Nikkei in Hotel Okura in Tokyo, President Macapagal meets with some of the shoguns of Japanese business. Left to right, Hiroshi Okuda, board chair, Toyota Motor Corp.; Shiegeji Ueshima, chair, executive director, Mitsui & Co., Ltd.; Hiroyuki Yoshihino, president/CEO, Honda Motor Corp. and Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas. *(Story on Page A2)*

MALACANANG PHOTO

FVR: I'm being treated like a punching bag

By Carlito Pablo,
Gerald G. Lacuarta
and Christine Avendaño

IS THIS the way to treat a former President?

Fidel V. Ramos yesterday expressed this lament amid accusations that he was responsible for the onerous contracts with independent power producers (IPP) entered into by his administration that resulted in today's high cost of electricity.

"I'm being treated like a punching bag," the former President said at a press conference in the employees' canteen in Malacañang.

"I did not create the problem. I inherited the problem," Ramos said, referring to the power crisis that began during the term of his predecessor, former President Corazon Aquino.

Ramos dealt with the problem by encouraging foreign and local companies to put up power generation plants.

He said that he would not be surprised if some quarters blamed him for Tuesday's Luzon-wide power outage because "this is the way they treat a former President."

"I'm expecting this," Ramos said.

He noted half in jest that a previous power outage caused by a school of jellyfish that clogged the cooling system of a power plant in Sual, Pangasinan, was mischievously attributed to him because "the jellyfish came from Pangasinan," his home province.

"But I'm not complaining because I'm a good boxer," Ramos said in the presence of his former energy officials, namely Rex Tantiongco, former chair of the Energy Regulatory Board; Francisco Viray, ex-secretary of the Department of Energy; and Guido Delgado, former head of the National Power Corp. (Napocor).

Like a boxer, Ramos came out swinging against his detractors.

Without naming names, Ramos noted that members of the 9th and 10th Congresses

FVR/A9

Second FRONT PAGE

MAGANDANG BALITA NAMAN!

Youth not thrilled with SK–Palace

MALACAÑANG does not blame the youth for not registering for the July 15 Sangguniang Kabataan elections.

Acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable Jr. said the low turnout in the two-day registration only proved that the SK does not appeal to the youth.

He added that the SK, which is a youth counterpart of the Sangguniang Barangay, "has not shown results" for the past years.

The low turnout "may be due to the fact that the SK has not been active in the past and has not shown any results for the interest of youth," Afable yesterday said in a phone interview from Tokyo, Japan.

GLORIA IN JAPAN

Toyota, Honda assure RP of more investments

By Elena R. Torrijos

TOKYO(via PLDT)—Top executives of Honda and Toyota motor corporations assured President Macapagal-Arroyo that they were set to expand their Philippine operations, acting press Secretary Silvestre Afable Jr. said yesterday.

Toyota chair Hiroshi Okuda and Honda managing director Katsuro Suzuki paid the President separate courtesy calls at the Hotel Okura here. Suzuki pledged P770 million in additional investments.

In a press briefing, Afable said the President invited the Japanese car companies to produce completely built-up units (CBUs) in the Philippines for export.

Afable said Honda was upgrading its Philippine plant to increase the export of manual transmissions from member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to the rest of the world.

Once in place, Afable said, the transmission facility would export 140,000 engines worth about $650 million annually. Honda assured that its next goal was to export CBUs from the Philippines.

Afable said the car executives raised the excise tax issue, but that the Philippine government was non-committal in resolving it in favor of the Japanese firms.

Japanese car makers want the government to keep the tax on Asian Utility Vehicles (AUVs) based on engine size, but Ford of America is lobbying for a tax system based on selling price.

Honda employs 1,014 persons in the Philippines, with investments totaling P3.8 billion. It has seven subsidiaries and affiliates that fill its spare parts requirements.

Toyota Philippines is 60 percent Filipino-owned and 40 percent Japanese. It has 1,435 employees, and investments totaling P4.6 billion.

EPA working group

The Philippines and Japan will create a working group to map out the anticipated economic partnership agreement (EPA) between them.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said this was agreed upon by President Macapagal and Japanese Trade and Industry Minister Takeo Hiranuma, who also paid her a courtesy call yesterday.

During the President's meeting earlier with Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Roxas said, it was suggested that the Philippines should aim for an EPA similar to the one signed between Japan and Singapore this year.

The Japan-Singapore EPA facilitates trade between the two countries and promotes exchanges in science and technology, information communication technology, human resources development and tourism.

Meanwhile, the Japan External Trade Organization (Jetro), a government agency that implements the country's foreign trade policies, yesterday assured President Macapagal that it would promote investments in the Philippines.

In a courtesy call on the President, Jetro chair and chief executive officer Noburo Hatkeyama said his agency would send a "reverse exhibition" mission to the Philippines in July to take a look at Philippine products.

"This means they will come not to sell, but to see what they can buy from us," Roxas said.

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More N. Korean defectors transiting in Manila

By Norman Bordadora

THE FIVE North Korean defectors seized by authorities from a Japanese consulate in China more than a week ago were expected to arrive in Manila late last night en route to South Korea.

Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin of the Department of Foreign Affairs said the transit of the asylum-seekers was allowed after Seoul sent a request yesterday morning. He said Vice President and Foreign Affairs Secretary Teofisto Guingona immediately granted the request "for humanitarian reasons."

The North Koreans were scheduled to leave Beijing at 3 p.m. yesterday on board China Southern Airlines. They were expected 9 p.m. at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, where they would take a Korean Airlines flight to Seoul an hour later.

A videotape of Chinese guards dragging the five—including a toddler and a woman—out of the consulate last May 8 had caused public outrage in Japan, and a diplomatic dispute between Japan and China.

Misako Kaji, spokesperson for Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, said the fate of the North Koreans remained uncertain.

Japan insisted that China violated diplomatic conventions by entering the consulate. Prime Minister Koizumi said, "We are lodging a protest with China, but we are doing our best not to let the incident damage Sino-Japanese ties."

Beijing has refused to treat North Korean migrants as refugees out of consideration for its long-time communist ally, Pyongyang.

Several North Korean asylum seekers have passed through Manila en route to Seoul in the past year.

"It's difficult to adopt a policy on transiting asylum-seekers," Ebdalin said. "Under International Law, no government is under obligation to accept them."

Big fishers delaying his confirmation, says Alvarez

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Heherson Alvarez yesterday blamed a pro-commercial fishing bloc and a congressman from Palawan for the delay in his confirmation by the Commission on Appointments.

"In what was considered a hostile act toward Alvarez and small fishermen, Palawan Rep. Vicente Sandoval continued his questioning and commenting on all the issues being taken up at the hearing, demanding additional documents from the DENR," said a statement released by Alvarez's office.

The statement said although Sandoval asked for documents on all the issues, his main concern was to question the implementation of Department Administrative Order No. 17 issued by Alvarez last year.

DAO 17 extended the country's municipal waters to 15 kilometers from the shoreline, giving small municipal fishermen preferential use of the areas.

The statement said that by opposing Alvarez's confirmation, commercial fishermen hoped to get DAO 17 archived and then rescinded by the next environment secretary.

"The small fishermen in our coastal towns should be given protection by the government so that they could continue to harvest the bounty of the sea without the repressive fishing practices of the big fishermen," Alvarez said in the statement.

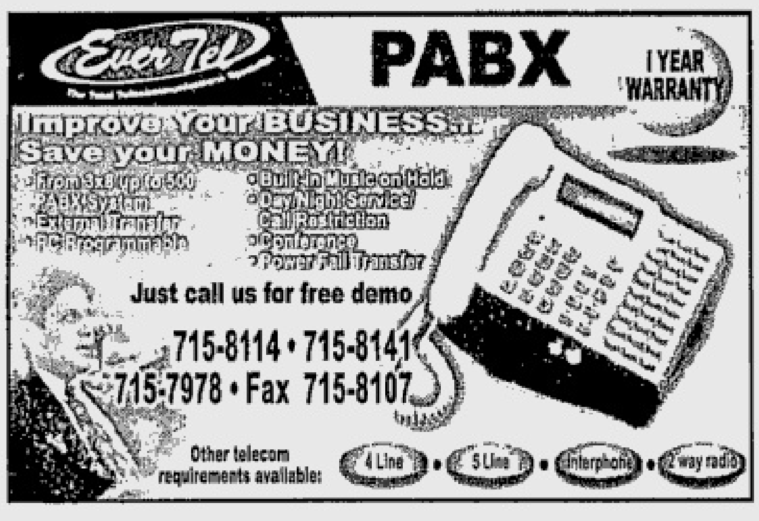
Alvarez said that at one point, Sandoval, vice chair of the CA's environment committee, demanded that DENR legal counsel, Undersecretary Gregorio Cabantac, be made to answer questions on five Integrated Forest Management Agreements (IFMA) already canceled by the department.

Alvarez said Sandoval's line of questioning was meant to eat up all the time allotted by the environment committee for deliberations.

But Alvarez said he obliged, nevertheless, and supplied the committee with all the documents Sandoval had requested.

The commercial fisheries sector had earlier complained that DAO 17 would deprive them of their traditional fishing grounds and drastically reduce their income.

Another congressman, Butuan Rep. Prospero Pichay, although not a CA member, was given parliamentary courtesy to speak on the IFMA issue. ***With Norman Bordadora***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Private schools dying–Pimentel

By Cynthia D. Balana

MANY private elementary and high schools may be forced to close their doors because of the continuing exodus of students to the public schools where education is free.

Senate minority leader Aquilino Pimentel also said some private schools were losing experienced teachers to the public schools where they are paid higher salaries and benefits.

The Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) had admitted to Pimentel "the situation has reached crisis proportions" and the "Catholic schools are dying."

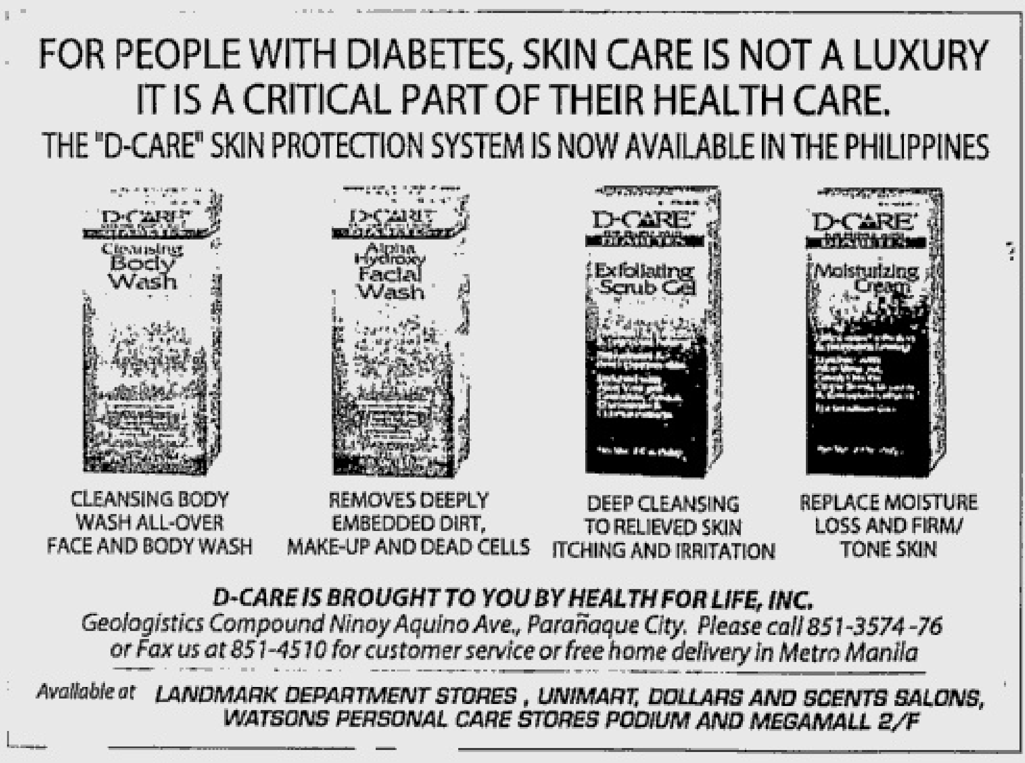
Because of this, Pimentel urged the government to review its assistance to private education so that troubled schools could get an extra state subsidy.

"There is a need to beef up assistance to private schools to prevent their closure and to give a healthy competition to public schools," Pimentel said.

The senator cited a recent article in Newsbreak magazine that said at least 10 CEAP member-schools have ceased operating since 1998.

Among the schools were the Divine World University in Tacloban City, the Ateneo de Davao University branch in Compostela, Davao del Norte; the Colegio de Hospicio de San Jose and the Asilo Colegio de San Vicente de Paul in Manila; a high school run by the Religious of the Virgin Mary in Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental, and Xavier High School in Mabuhay, Zamboanga Sibugay.

CEAP executive director Mariano Piamonte reported that in the last two years, the student share of Catholic elementary schools dropped from 4 percent to 3.13 percent while public schools' share increased from 92 to 93 percent.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To stay in Estrada case, 2 usecs accept demotion

TWO undersecretaries doubling as state prosecutors in the trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada didn't mind being "demoted" just to stay on the historic cases.

Until their dual roles were questioned by the Estrada camp recently, Dennis Villa-Ignacio was a "Usec" at the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Alex Padilla had the same post at the Department of Health.

Then came a motion from Estrada's lawyers seeking their disqualification, saying the two could not be "deputized" by Ombudsman Aniano Desierto since they held non-prosecutorial jobs in their respective departments.

The Sandiganbayan granted the motion, but the prosecution team moved for a reconsideration. With the appeal still pending, Villa-Ignacio and Padilla continued to see action in court against Estrada et al.

But two weeks ago, Desierto surprised both the justices and the Estrada defense team, now composed of court-appointed lawyers, when he announced the appointment of Villa-Ignacio as "Assistant Ombudsman."

And yesterday, it was Padilla's turn to wiggle out—by announcing that last Friday, he was appointed "Senior State Prosecutor" under the Department of Justice.

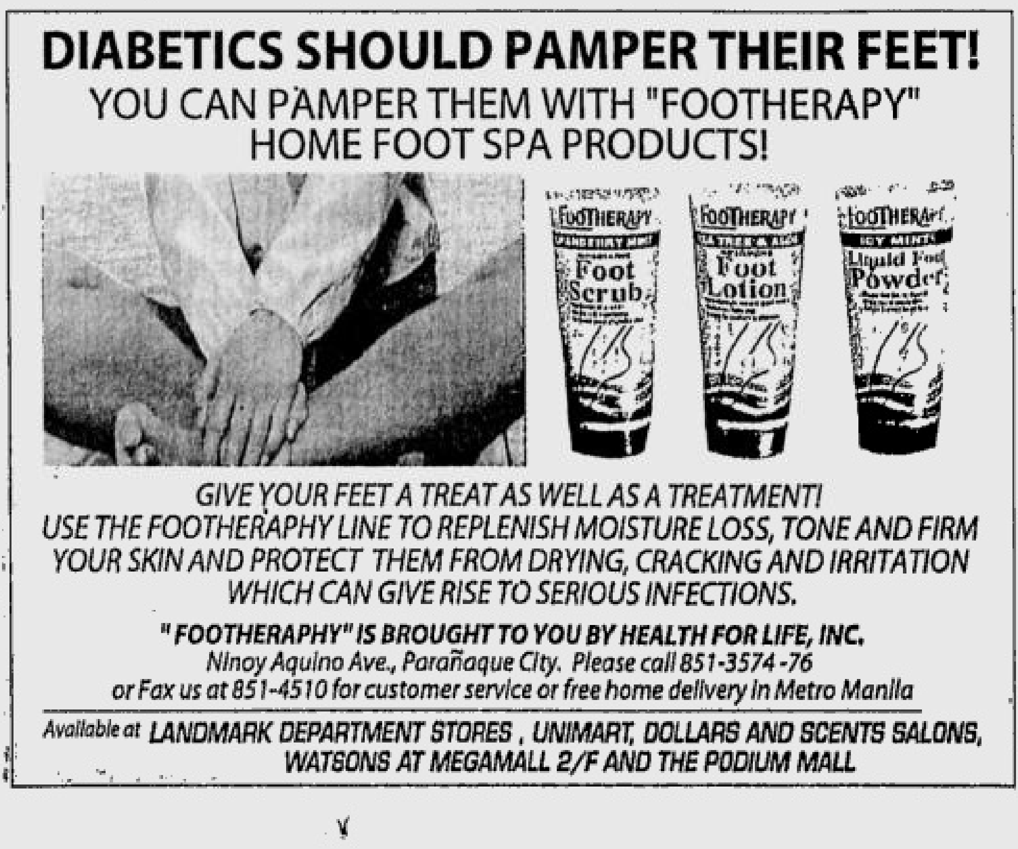
Like Villa-Ignacio before him, Padilla admitted that he had been "demoted."

Asked by reporters whether the new appointment was his way of skirting the disqualification issue, Padilla said, "We would have wanted it resolved, but maybe this would serve as a remedy lest the proceedings get tainted."

Estrada's lawyers, particularly Irene Jurado, could only complain before the justices that Villa-Ignacio and Padilla's new designations rendered "moot and academic" their predecessors' earlier victory against the two former "Usecs."

In a phone interview, Villa-Ignacio said: "I believe the demotion is only in terms of salary, not in the significance of the work involved."

Meanwhile, the Estrada lawyers filed a "counter-petition" against Plunderwatch, asking the court to cite the civil society group in contempt.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Erap trial enters 'jueteng' phase

THE TRIAL of deposed President Joseph Estrada yesterday began unraveling *"juetengate,"* the gambling payola scandal that was the main cause of his downfall.

A bank manager who earlier testified for the prosecution in the Estrada impeachment trial told the Sandiganbayan of bank accounts opened by Yolanda Ricaforte, "auditor" for Estrada's alleged share from operators of the illegal numbers game.

State prosecutors started presenting *juetengate*-related evidence in compliance with the court's decision to hear the revived bail petition of Jinggoy, former San Juan mayor and Estrada's co-accused son.

The petition argues that of all the four predicate crimes making up the Estradas' plunder charge, only the *jueteng* scandal implicates Jinggoy, making him eligible for bail.

Edelquinn Nantes, branch manager of the Equitable PCIBank Timog branch in Quezon City, said Ricaforte opened a savings account with the branch on Sept. 1, 1999 with an initial check deposit of P17.2 million.

In a span of four months, Ricaforte made 11 "cash" deposits to said account totaling at least P52 million, according to deposit slips that Nantes brought to court.

Nantes said Ricaforte also opened a current/checking account, seven special accounts, and an Emerald Fund account with EPCIB-Timog.

The wife of former Tourism Undersecretary Orestes Ricaforte, Yolanda is one of Estrada's eight co-accused in the plunder case. The couple fled on Jan. 20, 2001, the day Edsa II kicked Estrada out of power.

Also yesterday, prosecutors further unmasked Lucena "Baby" Ortaliza, whom previous witnesses described as the "representative" of Estrada and "Jose Velarde" in transactions with two banks in San Juan.

I'm a victim of politics, says YOU leader

By Carlito Pablo, Agnes E. Donato and TJ Burgonio

"I AM a victim of politics."

Thus asserted hunted police Supt. Rafael Cardeño to the INQUIRER Monday night, albeit by mobile phone, by way of professing his innocence in the killing of former Army officer Baron Cervantes.

Cardeño remained in hiding days after self-confessed gunman ex-Marine Sgt. Joseph Mostrales and supposed getaway car driver Jaime Centeno pointed to him as the brains of Cervantes' slaying.

Earlier, Cardeño had blamed the "patricians" of the Macapagal administration for the killing of Cervantes, who was a consultant to National Security Adviser Roilo Golez.

Before he was killed on New Year's Eve, Cervantes had waited for Council for Philippine Affairs secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon purportedly to hand him an intelligence report on an alleged destabilization plot against the government.

Golez and Saycon are identified with the administration, although the latter was estranged from President Macapagal-Arroyo recently with the unmasking of a "Freedom Force" supposedly out to topple the government and set up a civilian-military junta.

Breathing heavily on the line, Cardeño said his enemies would stop at nothing to destroy him.

"They have gone way out of line to destroy me," he said, without identifying his foes.

He said he will come out at the "appropriate time" to clear his name.

"For the meantime, my lawyers will have to take care of the situation," he said, referring to Homobono Adaza and his brother, Reynaldo.

Cardeño's phone call to the INQUIRER lasted less than one minute.

But as Cardeño remained hidden, Adaza was able to convince a Quezon City court yesterday to order the lifting of the police manhunt for him.

Judge Demetriou Macapagal Sr. of QC Regional Trial Court Branch 17 issued a temporary restraining order on the police manhunt for three days.

Adaza also asked the court to issue a TRO against PNP chief Director General Leandro Mendoza and the police when the case is raffled off.

He pointed out that no case had been filed against Cardeño in any court at the time Mendoza issued the manhunt order.

"The mounting of the manhunt with the view of arresting the petitioner (is) in violation of his rights under Article III, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitution which ensures every citizen the right of due process and equal protection under the law," Adaza said.

In filing the petition for a TRO, Adaza said Cardeño had signed the document in Biñan, Laguna, thus belying the fact that his client was in hiding.

"Manhunt? What manhunt?"

This was the reaction of Chief Supt. Doroteo Reyes II, director of legal services in the Philippine National Police, who said yesterday that, contrary to reports, Mendoza "had not issued a manhunt order" against Cardeño.

"It was not a manhunt but an accounting of personnel," he said, pointing out that Cardeño had failed to report to his new assignment in Western Visayas.

"He's an active member of the PNP and has to be accounted for. It's part of our moral and welfare program to see to it that he's present and around, safe and sound," Reyes said.

He said "manhunt" was not even a legal term and was not used by the PNP.

Reyes issued the statement after Judge Macapagal granted Cardeño a three-day reprieve from the "manhunt."

"To my mind, what is to be TROed? There's nothing to lift," Reyes said. He said, however, the PNP "would act accordingly" when it receives a copy of the TRO.

But the matter "would be easily resolved," he added, "if Cardeño showed up at the PNP."

A private joke, brother says of Lacson quote

By Martin P. Marfil

"IT WAS just a joke."

Lawyer Reynaldo Cardeño yesterday said his brother, police Supt. Rafael Cardeño, was only kidding when he said he was going to come out of hiding only when Sen. Panfilo Lacson became president.

Lacson was Philippine National Police chief in the previous administration and Cardeño was one of his subordinates.

Yesterday, Reynaldo publicly apologized to Lacson for the "private joke" that could adversely affect his political career.

"I wish to apologize to Senator Lacson for the light joke referring to his becoming the next President that was taken out of context and for which others maliciously linked him to the Cervantes slay," Reynaldo said in a text message to the INQUIRER.

"All the speculations against the good senator are malicious, politically motivated and libelous," he said.

In a later press conference at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City, Reynaldo said the joke was made during a conversation between him and his brother.

He said his brother, wanted for questioning in the shooting to death of former YOU spokesperson Baron Cervantes, had talked of going into "hibernation" in the wake of the police manhunt launched against him.

He said his brother then joked that he might surface only when Lacson became President.

"It (the joke) was not intended for others to use to link Lacson to the Cervantes killing," the lawyer said.

He said he was told that some individuals had started speculating that Lacson knew something about the killing of Cervantes and that the Cardeños were seeking the senator's help.

Reynaldo and his brother's other lawyer, Homobono Adaza, maintained their client was innocent.

They challenged the PNP to let media interview ex-Marine Sgt. Joseph Mostrales, who confessed to killing Cervantes and then pointed to Cardeño as the mastermind.

They said Mostrales might have been coerced into linking Cardeño to the crime.

"Why don't they interview (National Security Adviser Roilo) Golez and (Pastor "Boy") Saycon about the killing?" Adaza said. ***(See related story)***

For his part, Lacson had reacted to the "joke" by saying that while it was no secret that he harbored presidential ambitions, it was up to his party to decide who its standard bearer in the 2004 elections would be.

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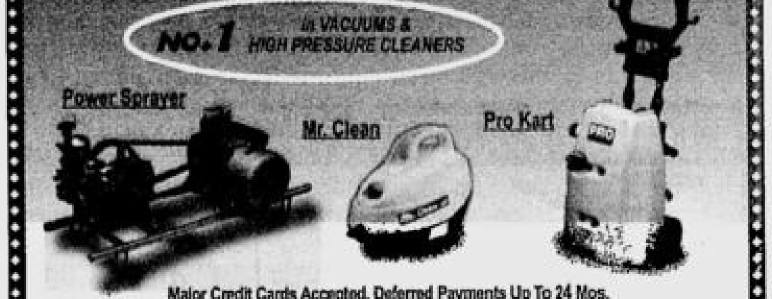

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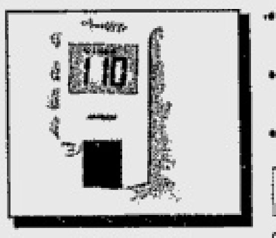

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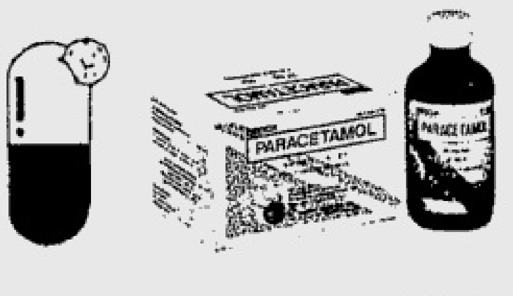

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Amoxicillin Suspension 250 mg/5 mL, 60 mL	65.00	Mefenamic Acid Tablet 500 mg	3.00
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Carbocisteine (SCMC) Capsule 500 mg	4.20	Paracetamol Syrup 125 mg/5 mL, 60 mL	23.50
Carbocisteine Syrup (SCMC) 100 mg/5 mL, 60 mL	46.00	Paracetamol Syrup 250 mg/5 mL, 60 mL	33.00
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Chloramphenicol Capsule 500 mg	5.90	Prednisone Tablet 5mg	3.10
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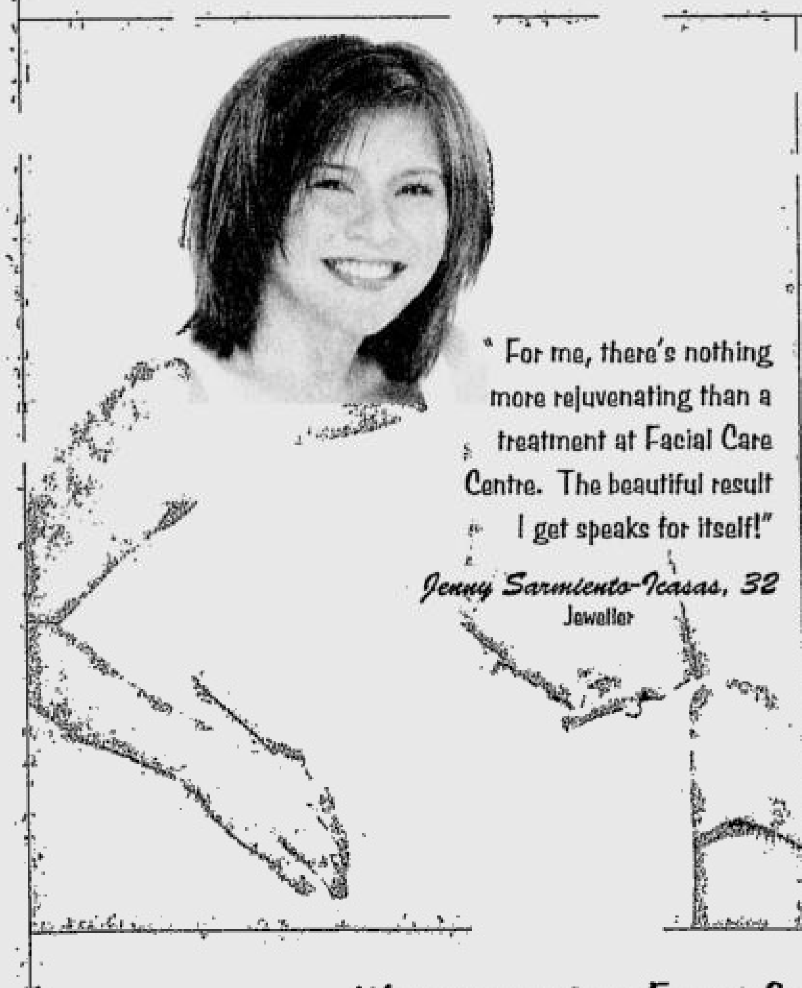

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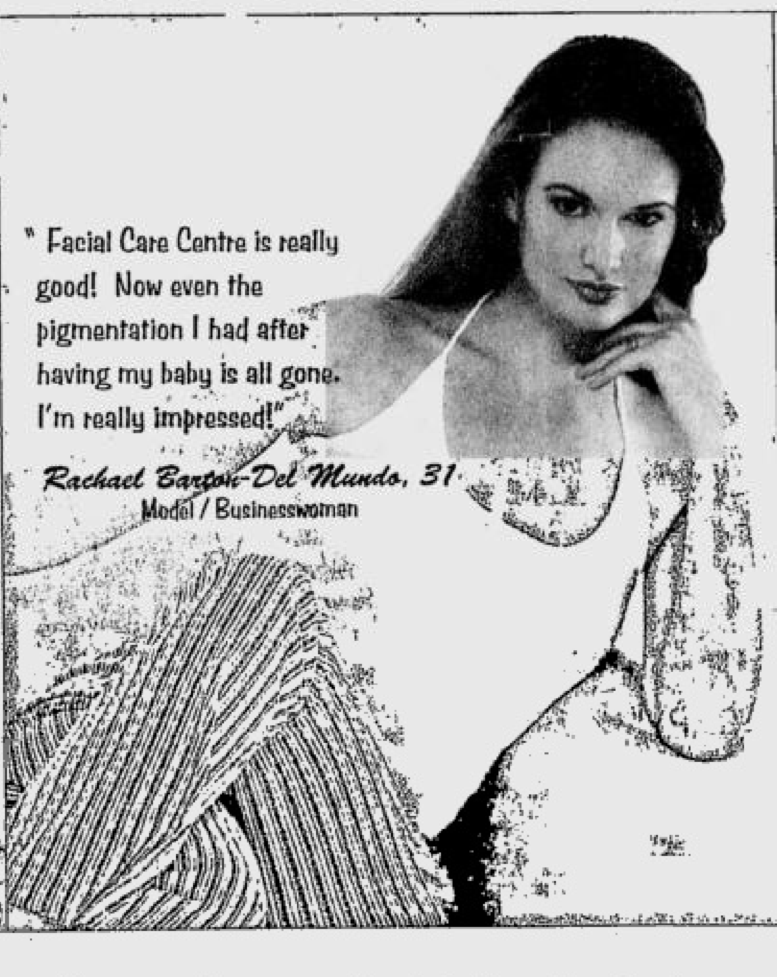

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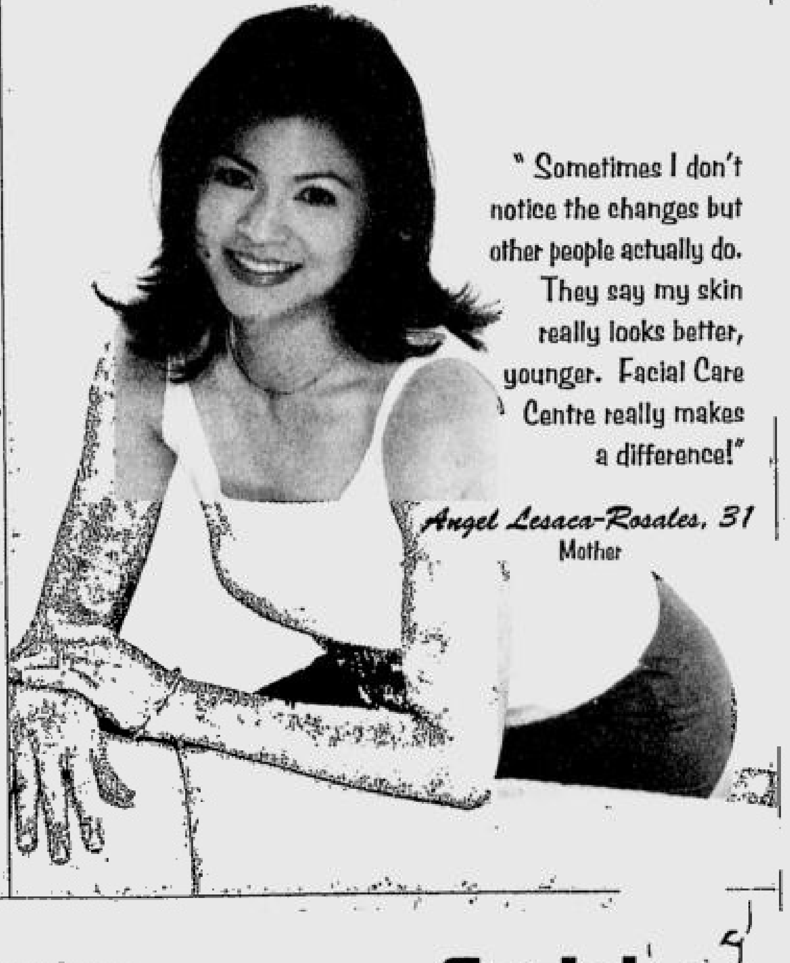

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COMBATTING TERRORISM

Bush hits N. Korea, hails RP

WASHINGTON—North Korea is guilty of a "troublesome" and "disappointing" effort to combat terrorism, the United States charged Tuesday, and also criticized Indonesia's "slow" moves to rein in domestic Islamic extremism.

But in its annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report, the Department of State showered praise on Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo and Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad for their anti-terror efforts following the Sept. 11 attacks.

And China, a frequent target of US criticism, was conspicuously praised for helping to meet the threat from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

President George W. Bush branded North Korea part of an "axis of evil" earlier this year, warning that it fell into a category of states along with Iran and Iraq with the potential to arm terrorists with weapons of mass destruction.

"The Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea's (DPRK) response to international efforts to combat terrorism has been disappointing," the report added.

Pyongyang was accused of being slow to improve cooperation on a 1994 deal known as the Agreed Framework which halted its nuclear weapons program.

"This latter failure, with its implications for nuclear development and proliferation, was especially troublesome," the report said.

"Moreover, some evidence suggested the DPRK may have sold limited quantities of small arms to terrorist groups during the year."

North Korea remains on a list of seven states the United States accuses of sponsoring terrorism.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation offered support for the US war against terrorism following September's assaults.

But the report said it had taken only "limited action" in support of anti-terror efforts, and although had taken some steps toward terrorist operations in its borders, had been "slow to acknowledge terrorism problems at home."

"At the end of the year the United States remained concerned that terrorists related to al-Qaida, Jemaah Islamiyah, and KMM were operating in Indonesia."

By contrast, the Philippines won glowing praise in the report.

"Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo has been Southeast Asia's staunchest supporter of the international counterterrorism effort," it said.

A US missionary couple is currently being held hostage by the extremist Abu Sayyaf in Basilan and the government has enlisted the support of US troops in its battle against the group which killed a US hostage last year.

The report commended Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, who visited Bush last week, for condemning the Sept. 11 assaults.

"The Malaysian Government cooperated with international law-enforcement and intelligence efforts, made strides in implementing financial counterterrorism measures, aggressively pursued domestic counterterrorism before and after Sept. 11."

In language that will be carefully noted in Beijing, China was also praised for agreeing to all of Washington's requests for anti-terror help.

"China, which also has been a victim of terrorism, provided valuable diplomatic support to our efforts against terrorism, both at the United Nations and in the South and Central Asian regions."

US allies South Korea, Japan, Australia, Thailand and New Zealand were also thanked for their solidarity in the anti-terror fight, while Singapore earned honorable mention for helping to thwart a planned attack there last year on the US Embassy.

Cement importers face tax evasion complaint

A LABOR leader has accused 19 cement importers of tax evasion and has asked the Bureau of Internal Revenue to investigate them for allegedly defrauding the government of billions of pesos in taxes for the last three years.

The complainant, Carlito Rallistan, president of the Association of Democratic Labor Organizations (ADLO) said these cement importers have deliberately deprived the government of its-much needed revenues by evading payment for what is due to their imported products.

The complaint has highlighted the raging controversy over the tariff imposed by the Department of Trade on cement imports. The Tariff Commission recently repealed the tariff, sparking protest from local cement manufacturers, who said it threatened to destroy the industry and the jobs of thousands of its workers.

Rallistan identified the importers as TCC Cement Corp., Southern Cross Cement Corp., Batumbakal Trading and Development Corp., Cohaco Trading Corp., NGC Land Corp., Arizona Realty Corp., Westpoint Industrial Sales Co., V&C Rising Management & Development Corp., GA Manufacturing Corp., Vicente T. Lao Construction, Shin Lian Hieng Inc., Lucky Cement Philippines, Horizon Concrete Products, HLC Construction & Development Corp., Samstone Infra-Construction Supply, and Davao Contractors Association Center.

"There are strong indications and proof that will show that these cement importers, while amassing millions and millions of profits, have intentionally and deliberately deprived the Philippine government of its much-needed taxes," he said.

Citing a report, Rallistan said that in 1999, the importers had a total importation of 11,860,750 bags of cement; 39,475,675 bags in 2000; and 42,755,950 bags from January to September of 2001.

Rallistan said these importers have remitted an unfair and grossly disproportionate amount in Philippine taxes based on the 2000 and 2001 financial statements by three of these importers, the NGC Land Corp., Batumbakal Development & Trading Corp. and the Cohaco Trading.

He said the landed cost of imported cement averaged P58 per 40 kg bag during 2001 while it retailed at P145.

The only other significant cost, he said, was land transportation, which ranges between P6 and P11 per bag. The majority of the margin (P76-P81 per bag) remains with the importer.

However, Rallistan noted that these three cement firms paid only P951,433 in income taxes in 2000 despite the fact that the value of their total importation in the same year was estimated at P162 million.

Cuajunco, 75

Teresita Briones Cuajunco, widow of Dr. Fidel Cuajunco, died yesterday. She was 75.

Her remains now lie at the Loyola Memorial Chapel in Guadalupe, Makati City. The interment date will be announced later.

She is survived by her children Victor and Babes Cuajunco, Alex and Tess Santos, Delfin and Eileen Alikpala-Cuajunco.

Pagcor vs compulsive gambling

THE STATE-owned corporation that ironically thrives on gambling is teaming up with a group of professionals in a campaign against the affliction called compulsive gambling.

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) said that while gaming is regarded as a legitimate form of recreation and entertainment, compulsive gambling "can wreak havoc" on the addicted gambler and his family.

Pagcor, in a press statement, said it has teamed up with the Philippine Foundation on Compulsive Gambling Inc. (PFCGHI) to address the problem of compulsive gambling and launch a campaign to increase public awareness on the issue. The foundation is a non-profit, nongovernment organization made up of doctors and psychiatrists. It also hosts the Philippine version of Gamblers Anonymous.

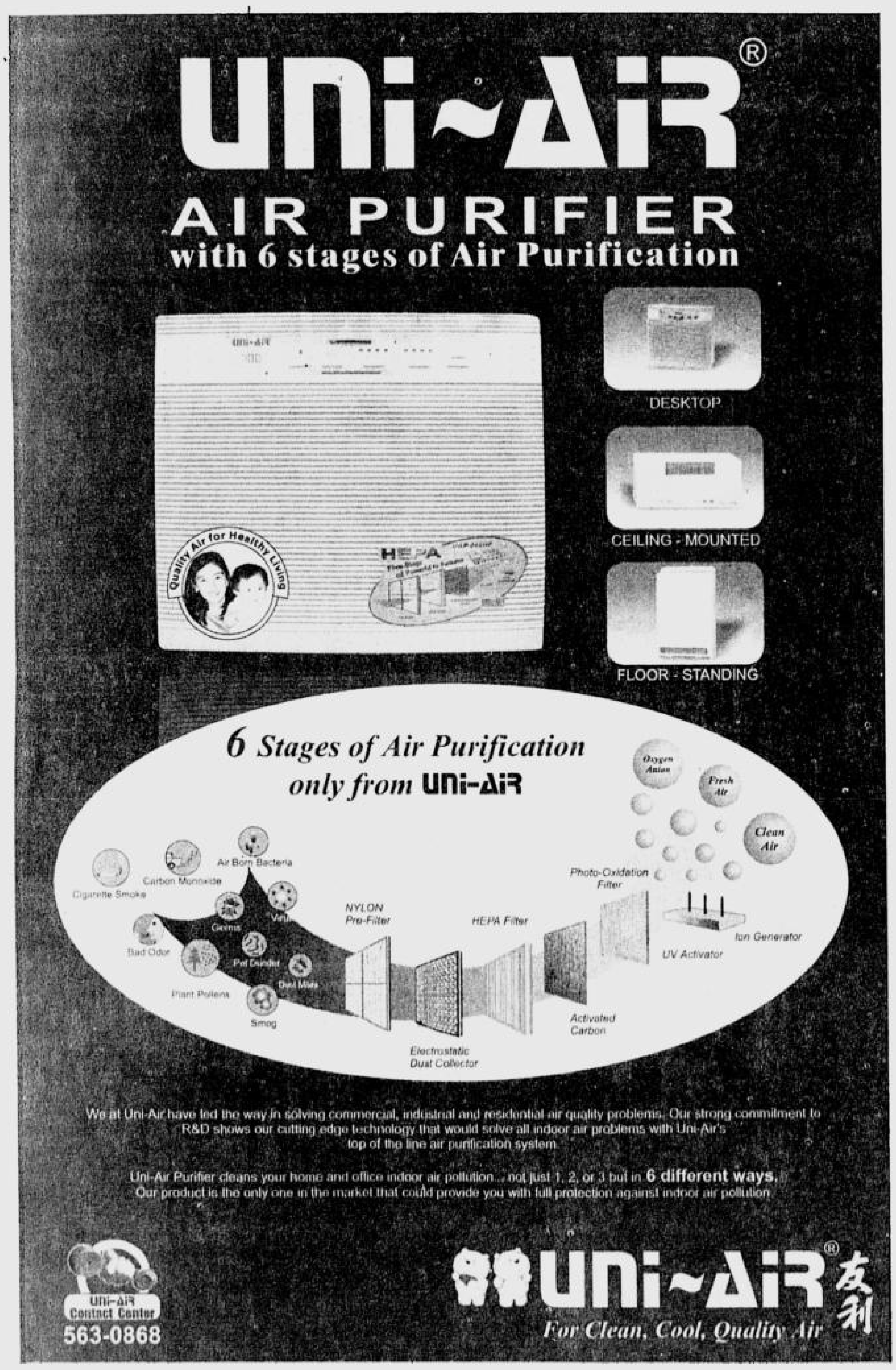
Pagcor chair Efraim C. Genuino said the gaming and entertainment giant is extending financial support and close collaboration with the foundation in identifying and treating compulsive or "pathological" gamblers.

Counseling

PFCGI president Dr. Jose Tojino said, as a first step, the group would try to help compulsive gamblers already known and identified and provide counseling for them and their families. The foundation will also open a 24-hour telephone hotline to give advice to people with compulsive gambling problems.

"Compulsive gambling" is defined as a progressive behavioral disorder in which an individual has a psychologically uncontrollable urge to gamble, much like an alcoholic's uncontrollable urge to drink, Pagcor said.

In the US, it is estimated that 15 to 20 percent of those who gamble may wager more than they can afford, sometimes borrowing heavily and causing problems in their lives. However, compulsive gambling is considered "treatable" with proper diagnosis and professional counseling.



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COUP CHARGES

Answer raps, ex-generals told

By Michael Lim Ubac

REYES

THE OMBUDSMAN'S Office yesterday ordered Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and three retired generals to comment on the mutiny charges lodged against them for their roles in last year's Edsa II.

A high-level panel formed Monday by Overall Deputy Ombudsman Margarito P. Gervacio gave the respondents five days to comply with the order.

However, Deputy Ombudsman for the Military Orlando Casimiro, who chairs the panel, has yet to order a formal investigation of the charges.

Besides Reyes, who was Armed Forces Chief of Staff at the time, ordered to comment were (retired) generals Diomedio P. Villanueva, Fortunato Abat and Leo Alvez.

Casimiro said the special panel based its order on Section 2, Rule II of the Rules of Procedure of the Office of the Ombudsman, which authorizes the investigating officers to refer the complaint to the respondents for comment, to help determine whether or not preliminary investigation is necessary.

The complainants, newspaper publishers Ninez Cacho-Olivarez and Amado Macasaet and columnists Horacio "Ducky" Paredes and Herman Tiu Laurel, and Angelito Banayo, were given five days to reply to the respondents' comments.

"We will release our evaluation of the case after all the comments and replies are submitted," Casimiro said.

Casimiro explained that under the Ombudsman's Office rules of procedure, the panel had the option to either dismiss the case outright for "want of palpable merit," or refer it to the respondents for comment.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, who earlier inhibited himself from any proceedings relating to the complaint, said the complaint had passed the fact-finding stage.

"It's already in the evaluation stage, but not yet in the preliminary investigation," Desierto said, and explained that the panel did not go directly into formal inquiry because the case was "untested, unchartered."

Lawmakers have insisted that the question of a coup d'etat ceased when Ms Macapagal's presidency was legitimized by the high court. But the probers said the case was independent of the legitimacy issue.

Lawyer Homobono Adaza, former counsel of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement of RAM, yesterday said the generals would not be facing the charges "if they had declared a revolutionary government after withdrawing support from President Estrada."

Desierto gave the special panel 90 days to complete its job.

The mutiny complaint, filed on May 16, invoked a 1990 law punishing coup plotters. It drew much of its evidence from a book written by INQUIRER columnist Amando Doronila.

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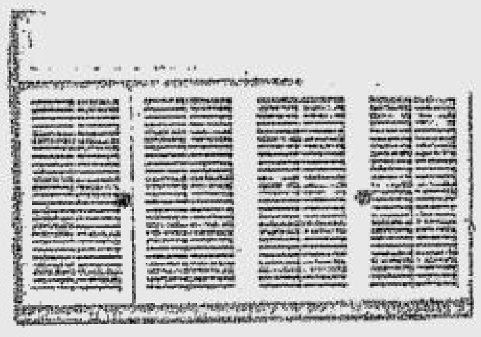
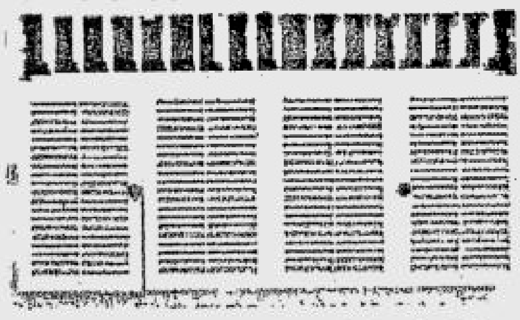
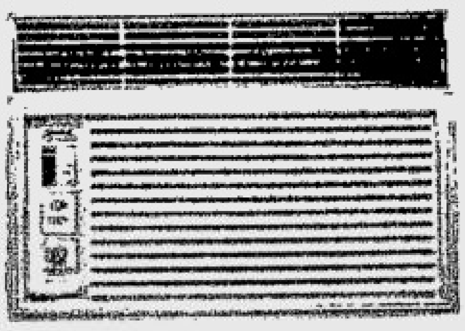


• Carrier Scepter. Bought in the 60s.



• Carrier Imperial. Bought in the 70s.



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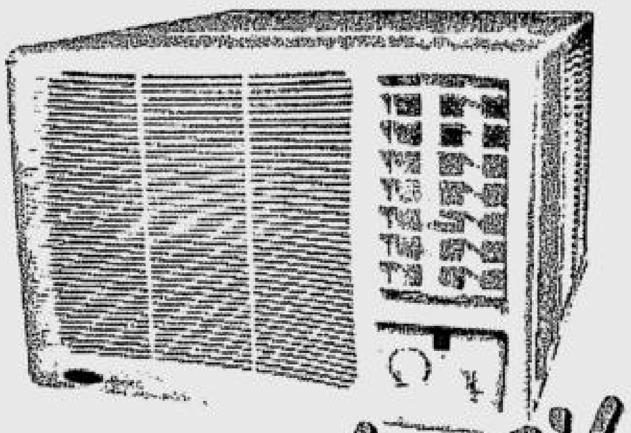

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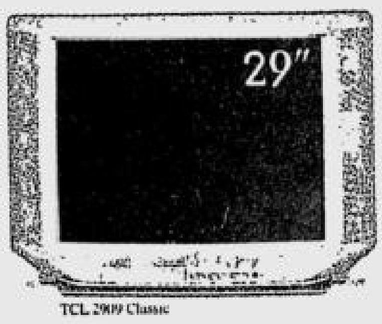

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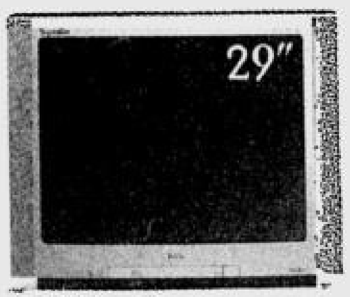

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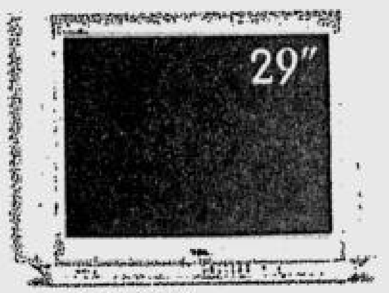

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Depoliticize power issues

EDITORIAL

THE POWER outage that disrupted the rhythm of life in Luzon last Tuesday unleashed a flood of conspiracy theories and frenzied search for scapegoats, the chief demons being the National Power Corp. and Meralco. The Napocor blamed the power failure to "transmission line problems," the cause cited for previous outages.

Members of Congress were quick to condemn the Napocor for alleged "blackmail" in retaliation for the suspension of the controversial PPA (purchased power adjustment) fee and to make the point that worse paralysis would take place if the fees were eliminated. Others saw in the power failure the phantom of coup plots, citing the coincidence that it always happened when President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was out of the country. This variant of the conspiracy theory insinuates that the outage was intended to embarrass her before foreign governments and that things get out of control when she turns her back.

If the explanation is correct that the Napocor or even Meralco engineered the outage to get back at populist clamor to reduce electricity costs, they could not have found a more counterproductive action than "sabotage" the power lines. What the Napocor and Meralco need more than anything else is good public relations to turn the tide of public opinion against them. A self-instigated power disruption can only fan the flames of public anger over electricity costs.

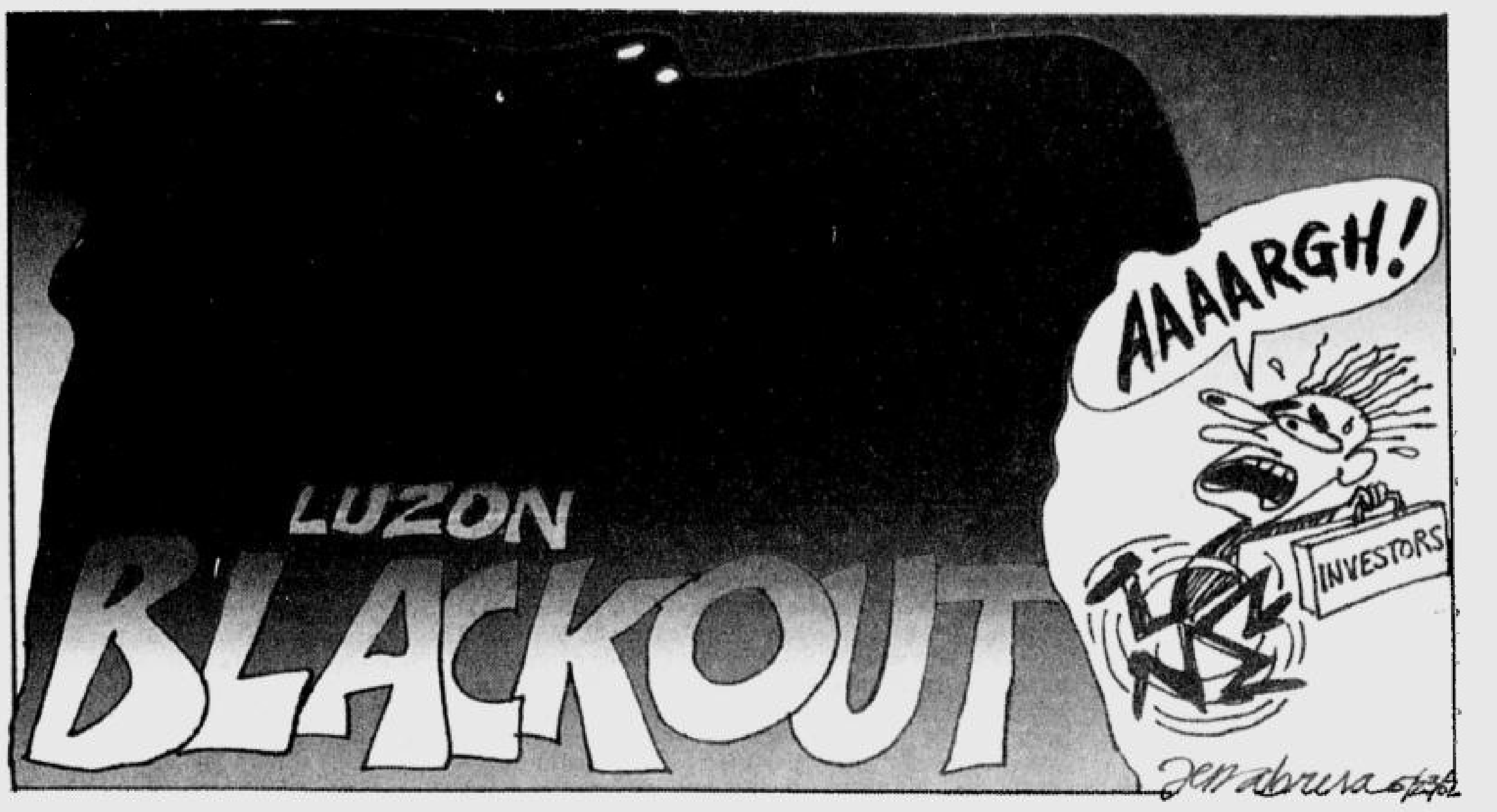
Napocor and Meralco transmission lines are open facilities exposed and vulnerable to tampering with, causing a breakdown of electricity flow. If the Napocor, a state corporation, sabotages its own facilities, the flak rebounds to the administration. This self-inflicted sabotage theory just does not make sense.

The outage broke out in the midst of congressional inquiries into the causes of high electricity rates and the responsibility of the PPA for these. The issues before members of Congress concern, among others, a moratorium on the collection of the PPA, reducing power rates to small electricity consumers and termination of the Napocor's power contracts with independent power producers (IPPs).

Because electricity rates touch all citizens and business enterprises, we are all wired to the PPA and citizens are very touchy when their electricity bills increase, especially abruptly. The fact, however, is that the PPA cannot be eliminated or even reduced drastically without consumers eventually paying for the costs of reduced PPA levies. Clearly, there is a need to balance the public demand for low electricity charges and development of electricity-generating capacity for future economic expansion.

The easiest thing to do is for populist groups to hijack the public clamor for reduced electricity bills and whip up demonstrations in the streets for quick fix solutions to electricity rates. The streets are not the best place for arriving at a reasonable formula for electricity costs. Whipping boys are easy to find, but in the end the best venue for the determination of rates are the regulatory bodies for utilities—in this case, the Energy Regulatory Commission. Not even Congress can provide the venue for a calm examination of the rates and the problems of electricity generation and transmission in the country. Congress is too volatile and its members cannot often resist the temptation to pander to the gallery in order to score cheap political points.

After the conspiracy theories have died down, all these questions about electricity rates have to be channeled to the regulatory commissions where they can be examined calmly and where evidence is the basis of determining whether rates are reasonable or not. The ERC has been in place for only one year. It should be given the chance to determine, with evidence, whether the utilities and the Napocor are charging too much for their services. So far, sweeping charges have been made that some utilities have committed "wholesale robbery" at the expense of the consumers, without the benefit of introducing hard evidence to back these allegations. It would be in the best interest of the public, especially the consumers, to depoliticize issues on energy costs.



Why is there only one Luzon grid?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THERE is one way to prevent widespread blackouts in Luzon: President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should not go on trips abroad. Every time she goes on an overseas trip, Luzon is hit by a blackout. This has happened three times already. After the last one, the President told National Power Corp. officials she will not tolerate another island-wide blackout. Well, there was another one, but she is out of the country and therefore there is nothing she can do about it. When she comes home, she can fire Napocor officials but by that time, her temper may have already cooled down.

In fact, the blackouts could have been caused by Ms Macapagal's frequent trips. She has traveled abroad more times than any Filipino president in the same short period. She has already broken the record of President Fidel V. Ramos, the travelingest president before Ms Macapagal. In fact, he is still traveling a lot even now that he is no longer president.

Why did her trips cause the blackout? Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said yesterday's Luzon-wide blackout started when the 230-kilovolt Biñan-Sta. Rosa transmission line "tripped." Because of this tripped line, other "adjoining transmission lines overloaded and caused more trippings and eventually a system blackout."

See, the key word is "trip," the same thing that our President is doing too often. The lines want to "trip" too. "If she can do it so often, why can't we?" they told one another. So they all went merrily tripping away. To put it another way, they tripped the light fantastic.

Joking aside, whoever are behind the blackout (it is not jellyfish this time), they are sending a message to the President—besides the obvious message to the people: No PPA, no electricity. To the President, the message seems to be: Don't be so cocksure. We can cut off your power—literally and figuratively. Its so easy when you're out of the country.

That's how it is usually done in banana republics. When the ruler heads for home, he finds out there is no home to go to except prison or the firing squad. He stays abroad where he could not make any trouble for the new junta. So, the more President Macapagal travels abroad, the greater the chances she won't be able to go home anymore. I'm sure anti-administration and pro-Erap forces are thinking about that. So, Ms President, don't travel so much. The more often you fly, the more opportunity you give to terrorists or coup plotters to plant a bomb in your plane. So don't imitate FVR. Stay home and do your work.

* * *

I've said it before but I'll say it again: Isn't it faulty for the Napocor to interconnect all the power plants into one Luzon grid? When one plant breaks down or one transmission line trips, the whole of Luzon is blacked out. It is so easy for coup plotters or terrorists to shut down one plant, or throw a cable across two transmission lines and short-circuit them and throw Luzon into darkness and chaos and therefore seize power easily.

If the power plants are not interconnected, when one or two shut down, only the areas they are servicing would be blacked out. The rest of Luzon would not be affected and go on as usual. It's so elementary, I don't understand why the Napocor insists on the single unified Luzon grid.

Perhaps one reason is the series of subsidies that the Napocor and the national government are implementing. Not many people know it, but the power consumers in Central Luzon are subsidizing the electric consumption of those in other parts of Luzon. Because the cost of electricity in Central Luzon is cheaper due to the economies of scale, users there pay for some of the electricity in far-flung areas where the cost of electricity is higher because the consumers are far apart. That's the first subsidy.

The second subsidy is to the poor. They have a lower power rate because they don't use much electricity. The difference is subsidized by the upper and middle classes who use plenty of electricity.

The third subsidy is paid by the industrial and commercial users which have the highest rates. They pay for the lower rates of residential users and local government units for streetlights.

In short, industrial and commercial firms are paying for part of the electricity consumed by residential users; the upper and middle classes are paying for part of the electricity consumption of the poor; and the electric consumers in Central Luzon are paying for part of the consumption in the provinces in Luzon. Does that explain the necessity for one Luzon grid?

* * *

Birthday bash: Myther Bunag of Myther and Friends is celebrating his advancing age today and is inviting friends to celebrate it with him at his pad in Malate, Manila.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: This one is timely because of the sex scandals involving priests:

A priest has retired and was found by one of his former parishioners in another parish.

"*Kumusta na po kayo, among?*" the parishioner greeted him.

"*Heto, pa-rosa-rosario na lang,*" the priest replied. Then he turned toward the kitchen and called out, "Rosario, *magdala ka nga ng dalawang kape dito.*"

He was transferred to another parish where he was found again.

"*Kumusta na po kayo, among?*" the parishioner asked.

"*Heto, naghihintay na lang ng grasya,*" he replied. Then he turned around and called out, "Grasya, *ang tagal mo naman. Nasaan na ang kape?*"

The priest was transferred a third time where he was found again by the same parishioner.

"*Kumusta na po kayo, among?*" he asked.

"*Heto, naghihintay na lang ng gloria.*" Then the priest called out, "Gloria, *kape nga!*"

What will it defend?

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE was a very interesting interview on CNN last weekend. The interviewee was Dr. Chee Soong Juan, a Singaporean activist who has been campaigning for the liberalization in Lee Kuan Yew's favorite country and has been repeatedly jailed for his pains.

He bursts the bubble on Lee's depiction of Singapore as a Mecca of prosperity, and as a country that has begun, albeit slowly, a process of democratization. There is poverty amid the prosperity in Singapore, Chee says, and quite substantially so. The lack of freedom of the press simply makes it hard to ascertain how much. As to rumors about creeping democracy, well, his own circumstances show how grossly exaggerated they are. Quite apart from having been imprisoned, and constantly being threatened with another round of it, he has been at pains to earn an income. He cannot teach, as no university will dare take him in. He cannot sell his books through bookstores, as bookstores fear being closed down. Instead, he hawks his books himself, wherever he can.

He particularly rues the fact that the Singaporean government has taken to labeling dissent as terrorism, in the wake of Sept. 11 and the anti-terrorism campaign, or ideology, it has spawned. Singapore's laws against people who threaten national security being exceptionally draconian, he does not relish his prospects. But, he says, what must be done must be done, whatever the consequences.

It's a good reminder of what the real problems of Southeast Asia, or indeed most of Asia, are. A reminder President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo in particular needs to hear. These problems are not about fighting terrorism—or at least not the kind of terrorism posed by the shadowy al-Qaida, the extent of whose threat we have only the Pentagon's word on.

These problems are about fighting repression, or at least the various obstacles to freedom. It is a good reminder to Ms Macapagal in light of the speech she gave in Japan, calling for a regional alliance to combat terrorism, which is a throwback to Seato and containing communism. It hits all the wrong notes, given in particular Okinawa's campaign to rid itself of US bases, a campaign fueled by routine abuses of American servicemen. The rape of high school girls has been exceptionally rampant, which has stoked Okinawans to outrage, a fact even the Japanese government, which has acquiesced to American wishes since the War, has been compelled to protest. But it hits an even more wrong note in light of the obstacles being faced by many Asian countries in trying to win freedom, or increasing its scope.

In her speech, Ms Macapagal cited how Cambodia and East Timor have been the beneficiaries of regional help. True, but which shows how an alliance against terrorism is superfluous. That help came well before Sept. 11.

In the case of East Timor, we may be reminded that we in fact refused to help the East Timorese when they were desperately trying to project their cause to the world. I recall that former President Fidel V. Ramos put his foot down on a conference on East Timor at the UP, which was to be attended by top East Timorese officials. He denied Horta and several other East Timorese entry to the country, saying it stood to sour Philippine-Indonesian relations and posed a threat to national security. I recall that Renato Constantino Jr., who was the chief organizer of the conference, heroically defied the order to cease and desist.

I do not recall that Ms Macapagal, who was a senator at the time, said anything to help the East Timorese cause. In fact, I do not recall her saying anything one way or the other, which is the story of her life. But which makes her current pitch now about defending East Timorese independence and struggle for democracy by an anti-terrorist alliance at the very least suspect. Ramos, not quite incidentally, is now also a staunch defender of the anti-terrorist campaign. The point is simple: You do not need such an anti-terrorist campaign to defend democracy or freedom in the region. You need only strong libertarian instincts.

Indeed, it may be asked if an anti-terrorist campaign of the kind proposed by Ms Macapagal will benefit democracy or freedom in the region at all. That campaign has so far only benefited the military and right-wing groups in the various countries that have embraced it, a thing that bodes ill for freedom and democracy in the region. Those are the very groups that have screwed freedom and democracy in Indonesia, Burma, Singapore and the other Southeast Asian countries to varying degrees. You do not need to look very far to see the insidious consequences of that proposition. You need only look at the transformation of Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar from shady character to champion of freedom for embracing "anti-terrorism" as his cause. That is what Ms Macapagal is proposing for the region.

She did say one other thing in her speech in Japan: "As shown by Afghanistan, (weak states) could become a base of operations for terrorists, a haven for criminals, or dumping grounds for toxic wastes." An argument she thought advanced the need for a regional anti-terrorist alliance. Well, we are a weak state and as a result of American military presence in this country since Independence, quite apart from our current hosting of the Balikatan exercises, we have become a dumping ground for toxic wastes (a legacy of Clark and Subic), a haven for criminals (in or out of uniform) and a base of operations for terrorists. The last I leave the reader to identify. They are not necessarily the Abu Sayyaf.

A regional anti-terrorist alliance? Yes, but whom will it serve? And what will it protect?

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Flavier's inspiring story

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

EARLIER this column wrote about the introduction by Sen. Loren Legarda of an amendment to Sen. Edgardo Angara's Senate Bill 2026 which proposed to make the Eidul Fitr, the beginning of the Muslim month of fasting, or Ramadan, into a national holiday. Legarda wanted to amend the bill by introducing a second national holiday, the Eidul Adha, which is the 10th day of the pilgrimage month of Hajj. But apparently the other senators did not conform to this idea—they felt it could defeat the purpose of reconciliation to declare two Muslim national holidays right away; they wanted the Eidul Adha declared a holiday in the Muslim region only.

* * *

Last Monday, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel saw the opportunity to prevent the Legarda amendment from becoming a reality. He questioned the voting on second reading last Thursday, May 16, which, to begin with, did not have a quorum. Pimentel pointed out that the majority and the minority had agreed to have only debates and deliberations on issues, but no voting on Thursdays; but he pointed out that this was violated last Thursday. As a result, Sen. Joker Arroyo proposed that the voting on the journal for the second reading be postponed until the issue of last Thursday's "illegal" vote was resolved.

Senate Assistant Majority Leader Juan Flavier gallantly admitted to being guilty of allowing the violation, doubtless as a concession to his pretty colleague. Senate President Franklin Drilon agreed to Arroyo's motion, and later, wisdom prevailed on the senators: they agreed that Eidul Adha would be observed only in the region.

* * *

At the recent Baguio City High School's alumni homecoming, the golden jubilarians included such distinguished personalities as Flavier and former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu, and his childhood sweetheart Lydia Baskinas, who later became his wife. Espiritu was the class historian and in his class prophecy in the Class '52 annual, he predicted that class valedictorian Flavier would become a doctor, do his postgraduate studies in Johns Hopkins University in the United States, become secretary of health and eventually senator. In a little book called "Coincidence or Miracle," which contains inspiring stories written by various personalities about their own amazing life experiences, as compiled by Flor Gozon Tarriela and Butch Jimenez, Flavier confessed to being awed that Espiritu's "prophesy" about him came true to the letter.

* * *

Espiritu's clairvoyance is a hitherto unrevealed aspect of his personality, but today I would like to reprint from that little book Flavier's own narrative about his struggle to become a doctor amid his family's great poverty. It's timely to recall Flavier's experience at this time when tens of thousands of Filipino families are struggling with the difficult enrollment of their children this June. I hope his piece would serve as an inspiration to all the parents heroically laboring to give their children a fighting chance in life through education. Here's Flavier:

"I was born to a destitute couple in the slums of Tondo. My parents were semi-literate, hardly able to write their names, but for some reason, were voracious readers in the vernacular. My father was a poorly paid mechanic in a factory while mother wrapped bath soap and earned a centavo for every few hundred pieces.

"Our house was a shack with run-down walls and rickety bamboo stairs and a roof made of rusty GI sheets anchored with big rocks and discarded tires. Fortunately the roof leaked only when it rained. Our only amenity at home was a small radio that was on full blast 24 hours a day.

"Years later, when I asked my father why I was so short, he replied, 'We had nothing to feed you.' I will never forget the day when my favorite elementary school teacher paid us a weekend visit. I gallantly invited her to lunch and she accepted my impulsive hospitality. I didn't know that our family of eight was having one small *paksiw na bangus* for lunch! I almost choked with shame as we ate. (This is probably why, today, when we invite friends over, I instinctively ask for at least five viands to be served.)

"Every year we got our school clothes before classes began. I was fourth in a brood of six and received only tattered hand-me-downs. I don't remember getting new shoes at all during grade school—only after I graduated from grade six. My favorite leather shoes I inherited from my older brother, but I had to walk carefully, because the soles, tied in place with a piece of wire, kept flapping open.

"In the midst of poverty, my mother never failed to celebrate our birthdays. Once she gave me a party with *guinatan, pancit bihon* and a birthday candle. In front of my friends and relatives, before I blew the candle, she reminded me to make a wish. I said, 'God, thank you for this party. But next year, please God, put a cake under my candle.'

"My father lost his job after leading a strike at the factory and a year later, we were all on the verge of starvation. My parents were forced to relocate the family to the Balatoc gold mines in Benguet. In the mining community was a river: the affluent lived on one side; we lived on the other, in barracks-like housing, in squalor and deprivation. In Tondo, everyone had been so poor I never noticed the difference. In the mining area, there was a stark contrast; for the first time I knew the meaning of poverty in the midst of the plenty. For my daily *baon* to school, my mother alternated boiled *camote* with pan de sal and shredded *tuyo*. Whenever I complained, my father would glare at me and say, 'Pretend you are eating *kastanyas* when you bite into the *camote*—they taste the same. Think you are eating *hamon* when you eat your *tuyo* sandwich.'"

(To be continued)

Morals and judgments

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

REACTIONS to yesterday's column on the discriminatory policies of certain Catholic schools against the children of single or separated parents have come in.

Among those reacting to the column was Dr. Estrella Macrohon, school director of the Poveda Learning Center, who denied that Poveda has, or ever had, a policy to refuse admission to girls from so-called "broken homes." "Many of our students have parents who are single or separated," said Dr. Macrohon, "and can you imagine if those parents read your column? They would be alarmed and frightened!"

So rest assured, parents of Poveda girls, your daughters will not be singled out even if you happen to be single, separated, or in the process of ending your marriage.

But why, I asked Dr. Macrohon, was Poveda cited by parents I talked with as being one of those with such a policy? Maybe it was because they asked for a copy of the parents' marriage contract? "But we require it only because we want to have complete records on all our students," said Dr. Macrohon. Well, you know how paranoid single and/or separated parents can get in this society. Asking for a marriage contract could be for them tantamount to asking them to account for their behavior and marital status.

* * *

BY E-MAIL, "Jane" wants to know: "*Bakit naman ipinipilit ng ibang magulang ang mga anak nila sa iskwelahang alam naman nila na nagdi*-discriminate (Why do these parents insist on enrolling their children in a school that they know discriminates against them)? By that alone, parents should spend their time looking at other schools. *Pero syempre gusto ng ibang* parents *ang* (But of course some parents desire the) 'prestige' that comes with these so-called 'exclusive schools,' if they'll be honest with themselves. If these 'exclusive schools' admit they are not prepared to handle children from broken/single parent homes, or whatever reason they have, then the (single) parent should move on. If I were that parent, I would think that it's better for my child to go somewhere else. Yes, Ms A's daughter could be the well-behaved and well-adjusted young lady her mother thinks of her. But when 'exclusive schools' want students who live with both parents and have school activities that would involve both parents, *hindi kaya magka*-negative effect *ito sa bata* (on the premise na *ma*-accept *siya doon*) when such activities take place *kasi siya*, mother *lang ang* present? (Won't this have a negative effective on the child, assuming she's accepted, when such activities take place because only her mother is present)?"

"Jane" recalls the story told her by a friend, a single mom. Her son's school hosted a "father and child activity," which posed something of a problem for her and the boy since the father is estranged from them. But "instead of castigating the school," says "Jane," her friend only wrote a letter explaining the situation and asking if they couldn't host a "mother and child" activity the next time around.

* * *

WELL, I get your point, "Jane." But in focusing on this matter—not a life-and-death issue, granted, nor even as annoying and visceral as the PPA—I just wanted to bring up just another example of the petty tyranny and rank hypocrisy that so-called "moralists" impose on the less sainted.

It is difficult enough being a single or solo parent—through separation, death of a spouse or overseas work—in this society without schools imposing their own judgments on their relationships and on the emotional or psychological health of the children.

Which brings me to Tuesday's column on Mon and Dina Paterno. Readers have likewise weighed in with their opinions, and many of them, who say they know both Mon and Dina and even "both sides" of the story, swear to Mon's decency and exemplary qualities as a father. One or two have castigated me for "involving" innocent parties, the Paternos' three girls. This last I don't understand since I was talking to their mother who presumably had weighed beforehand the implications of "going public" with her story.

Was I sitting in judgment on Mon's "morals"? I don't think so. I was merely pointing out the irony of his being appointed by a President who at the start of her term sought to assure the public of her official family's "moral ascendancy" by requiring proof not just of competence and integrity, but even of personal probity. As we said at the time of Erap, we say so now: when one aspires for public office, elective or appointive, one invites scrutiny not just of one's official acts, but also of one's person and personal life. Transparency and accountability apply to all aspects of one's life. Nobody said government service was ever a bed of roses.

* * *

ON ANOTHER matter, "Sam Johnson" writes to warn women about potential "pen pals" from the United States, many of whom write to a pen pal column in the tabloid "Bandera." Of late, says Sam, "the column is FILLED with men in US prisons looking to meet Filipinas. I'm not sure if the editors don't realize it or don't care but all those guys listed in there with 'FCI' on their address are in a Federal Correctional Institute, also the ones with very long numbers by their names, those are prisoner numbers."

This, then is to warn women that if they want to start corresponding with "lonely" American pen pals, they could end up starting a relationship with a convicted felon. "At the very least, somebody should warn these poor girls that their new pen pals might be pretty bad characters," says Sam.

'Ahi naklakan' for Timor-Timur!

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

I DID shed a few tears while watching on cable TV close to midnight last Sunday the independence day rites in East Timor and the oath-taking of 55-year-old President Jose Alexander "Xanana" Gusmao. I waited for that, I made sure I would not miss that.

Like I did a couple of years ago when I thought East Timor would finally be free, I am going over the stuff that I brought home from East Timor in 1995. It is to remind me of the very brief time I spent on that island. A hand-woven cloth with the words Timor-Timur (East Timor or Timor Leste), a sandalwood necklace, a pencil holder made out of a soda can woven over with dyed grass. I had brought home great ground Timor coffee, a stone I picked up from the beach outside of Dili, the capital, plus memories of being thrown out, along with some human rights watchers, and hastily put on a plane to Bali.

East Timor is free at last. And I wonder—facetiously—if the post cards I mailed in 1995 from Dili to Manila which I addressed to myself would finally arrive. Before saying good riddance, the Indonesian military intelligence that rounded us up, gave us time to pass by the post office to mail our postcards and even escorted us to the famous Kristus Raja statue (like the one in Brazil) where one of our companions, an Australian artist and aborigine, performed a tribal ritual without warning. Our stern escorts were stunned.

I was there for the peace pilgrimage called *Ahi Naklakan* Solidarity Tour. *Ahi naklakan* is Tetum (the language of the East Timorese) for light.

I have kept the photos I took at that time: the 27-meter tall Kristus Raja (East Timor was Indonesia's 27th province) standing on top of a hill overlooking the bay, the marketplace, vendors selling papaya leaves (for a delicious vegetable dish with coconut milk), altar girls serving at Mass, beaches and beaches, even the military men who came for us. One always tugs at my heart—a photo at the Bali airport with those who were barred from entering and left behind, Bishop Aloisius Soma of Japan among them, holding candles and a blazing banner which said, "East Timor, you are not forgotten."

East Timor was not forgotten. Not by solidarity movements all over the world that kept the fires burning despite their own governments. The one here in the Philippines was very involved and even hosted a conference here a few years ago. Many delegates, Nobel Peace Prize winner Jose Ramos Horta among them, were barred by the Ramos government from entering. Pressure from the Indonesian government, you see.

Colonized by Portugal for four centuries and seized by Indonesia in 1975, East Timor had suffered for so long it was called The Land of the Crosses. There is an awesome 1975 photo that shows the sky of East Timor darkened by descending Indonesian paratroopers. Thousands died that day, many of them buried under the airport tarmac where Pope John Paul II spoke during his visit in 1989.

With the 1999 referendum, freedom seemed a vote away. The East Timorese voted to be out of the claws of Indonesia. They are a different race and with a cultural history so unlike that of predominantly Muslim Indonesia. They speak Tetum and Portuguese, not Bahasa. They are not Javanese. They are Christians, not Muslims. Unlike Indonesians, they were not colonized by the Dutch but by the Portuguese.

After the East Timorese gave a resounding No to Indonesian rule in 1999, the massacre began. Pro-Indonesia groups went on a bloody rampage that went on for months the United Nations had to intervene. The Philippines sent troops there and our own Gen. Jaime de los Santos headed the peace-keeping force. (Our own Namfrel went there too to supervise the first national elections some months ago.)

Many people died in 1999, among them foreign and native Catholic priests and nuns. It was amazing how, despite the scarcity of news during the bloodiest days when the media had to seek safer grounds, information traveled fast via e-mail. SOS from beleaguered missionaries were sent out through cyberspace. E-mail was indeed God's gift to those marooned in an island in flames.

I did a story on this phenomenon in 1999 and I had to pore over electronic mail sent to the whole wired world even while death was banging at their doors. The epistles dripped with terror. The missionaries became accidental historians who saw the bloody birthing of a nation.

But it was the earlier work of courageous American journalists Allan Naim and Amy Goodman, and above all, the film directed by British freelancer Max Stahl on the 1989 massacre in Santa Cruz that roused the world.

All that is over now. But not quite. Independence, as charismatic poet-president Xanana Gusmao said, would mean nothing if poverty is not addressed. East Timor takes a bow as the newest nation (and soon, as a new Asean member) and one of the poorest in the world. With a population of only 800,000, it is also Asia's second Christian country after the Philippines. East Timor has potential sources of wealth—tourism, agriculture and oil from the Timor Gap near Australia.

I have kept the CD titled "Xanana" which was produced in secret when Gusmao was still in prison. It has Gusmao's voice, roaring music and real sounds of war and death. A Portuguese song of Timorese prisoners languishing in the Indonesian prisons goes. *"Who will look after our dead bodies? Water with tears the flowers which lie over opened graves?/When our time comes at last, remember us./With our own blood we write the history of our land/With our lives we will rebuild our land for the future generations..."*

The time has come. Freedom at last. Viva Timor-Timur!

Tired of being adapted

YOUNGBLOOD

Dynlubio

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I STAND naked in the middle of this room, watching my reflection in the mirror. This is all I have—all I am. A girl with messy hair, a round face, slightly long neck, small breasts, undefined waist and wide hips. My eyes are round—they've seen more than they should. My mouth, with its thin lips, has said more than it should. My ears are somewhat pointy and round at the same time—they have heard more than they should.

I watch my body, the temple this spirit has chosen to be its own and I wonder, is this all people could see? Is this body, after 21 years, just a body? I have no wrinkles on my face that cry out "I've suffered, too." My smooth face belies the troubled mind it covers up. I have no scars to prove I've been hurt before, to say that I have fallen on my knees so many times they actually hurt. My hands are small and fragile-looking and except for the veins that slightly show under my skin, they don't really tell anyone they're strong.

I haven't used my body yet. I have never ran a marathon or climbed a mountain with it. I have never swam laps or rowed a boat to sea. I haven't volunteered to hand out relief goods to unfortunate victims of earthquakes or typhoons. I haven't stood for countless hours in the middle of a highway with a million other people to demand justice or freedom. I haven't done anything with my body.

I have never run too fast and hard that my heart wasn't pumping blood anymore but battery acid. I have never stretched my arms far enough to touch anyone else. My stomach had never withstood starvation for a good cause.

My body is as fresh, as unused as it was 21 years ago when I acquired it. When I die and my spirit leaves this temple and some other spirit would use it, I wouldn't know. I wouldn't be able to say, "Hey that's my body!" That's the scar I got when I climbed Mt. Everest and fell down, the hard ice slicing through my body. It would pass me by and I wouldn't even give it a second glance.

The only thing I've done anything with is my mind. I've used and overused my mind. I've read so many books, memorized so many songs, digested so many poems and sonnets that I'm afraid I'd wake up one morning and find myself lost. I could feel my mind so crowded, filled with ideas and opinions to the brim. My mind is scarred, wrinkled, rough and soiled. It's the only thing I actually use.

My body might be young and fresh but my mind isn't. It has conquered storms and traveled the world. It has flown to space and back again, It has loved and hated people and things. It has cried for justice and truth. For 21 years my mind worked non-stop. And it is tired.

Meg Ryan once said, in one of her movies (because I've never met her and she doesn't know I exist), that there are things I see that would remind me of books I've read, but shouldn't it be the other way around? And I know exactly how her character felt. There are things, emotions and places that remind me of the books, but I have never read a sentence and then said to myself, this reminds me of something or someone.

Is it possible for my mind to work so much and my body not to? I feel as if I have done a million things with my life and I don't have anything to show for them. I have no proof. Everything I've ever done is just in my head. I could write books and stories and poems. I could even make a movie about the things in my head but they won't be real—not to me, not to you. The stories I'll tell will merely be based on something I've read or heard, not something I've done or felt. They won't be unique to me. They won't be unique to you, as well. The things I have to say aren't even my opinion but the opinion of a lot of people I've pieced together to make it seem like it's mine.

And I say I'm a writer. When in truth I'm merely a word processor, taking things out, stitching them together and making sense out of them. I don't have an opinion of my own, I don't even know what or how to feel about certain issues.

I am adapted. My mind might be overflowing with ideas and opinions but they're not mine. I borrowed them from books and movies and songs. I haven't written anything that's purely mine, purely original. I haven't said anything that's not influenced by other people. And I'm tired.

I'm tired of quoting movies, I'm tired of singing songs and I'm bored of reading the same book over and over again and then watch the movie. I want to think. I want to feel. I want to make things and create ideas. I want to use my body to make the things in my mind a reality. I'm tired of being adapted.

I stand naked in the middle of this room, watching my reflection. This is all I have—all I am. But not for long.

Dynlubio, 21, studies at the University of the Philippines.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . . ?

Manor Hotel tragedy

ON AUG. 18, 2001, a fire broke out at the Manor Hotel in Quezon City killing at least 75 people and injuring several others. The victims were mostly delegates to the Dawn Flower Destiny Conference, a Christian evangelical conference led by American preacher Don Clowers. It was attended by participants from Christian groups all over the country. (PDI, 8/19/01)

A building inspection conducted by the Bureau of Fire Protection on Aug. 8, 2000 revealed that the hotel violated at least seven fire safety regulations. These were obstructions to fire exits on each floor including locked doors, defective manual fire alarm system, no emergency lights and no sprinkler system, no automatic fire suppression system, inadequate portable fire extinguishers, no smoke and heat detectors, defective manual fire alarm system, inadequate secondary stair or fire exit and a defective standpipe system.

Several violations were further discovered when the building was inspected anew in June 2001.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte immediately fired Alfredo Macapugay, the city engineer whose term of office witnessed two tragedies—the Ozone Disco and Lung Center fires. Business permits chief Ricardo Galvez was also sacked after Belmonte found out he renewed Manor's permit last June.

On Sept. 27, 2001, charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and serious physical injuries and violations of the Quezon City Revenue Code were filed against William Genato, his wife Rebecca, Porfirio Germina, Marion Fernandez, Dionisio Cua Arengino and Antonio Beltran—all incorporators of the company that owns the hotel—for the death of at least 75 victims and serious physical injuries of at least four survivors. Nineteen survivors also filed separate cases of reckless imprudence resulting in slight physical injuries. The cases were assigned to Branch 43 of the Metropolitan Trial Court.

Except for Beltran, all the accused posted bail on Sept. 28, 2001. A warrant for Beltran's arrest was issued on Oct. 24. On the same day, two more survivors filed additional cases of reckless imprudence resulting in slight physical injuries.

The five accused who were out on bail pleaded not guilty when arraigned on Nov. 20, 2001. Arraignment for the additional cases was conducted on Jan. 24, 2002. They likewise pleaded not guilty.

Case status: The cases are set for pre-trial on May 28. The additional cases filed in October 2001 were consolidated with the rest of the cases. Beltran is still at large.

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

Athletes not fit to compete in Palaro

SUCCESSFUL participation in athletic competition requires training and conditioning in four areas, namely: (a) strength and power, (b) physiological (endurance or stamina), (c) flexibility (suppleness) and (d) mental or psychological. Proper nutrition is the fifth factor. And finally, proper competition equipment and supplies. The nurturing care of coaches and parents in the case of young athletes is also extremely important. And based on training principles, the barest minimum period for physical conditioning should at least be six to eight weeks, followed by another six to eight weeks of developing proper skills and another six to eight weeks devoted to "peaking" for competition. This means that the barest minimum period to prepare an athlete for competition is from four and a half months to six months.

The athletes who will participate in the 2002 Palarong Pambansa did not undergo this required training period and preparation for competition. Without undergoing training to strengthen their muscle joints and other body parts, those in the sprints, throwing and jumping events which require sudden ballistic movements will not only be performing at low par but will be susceptible to muscle and joint injuries. Athletes in the endurance, middle and long distance events which require stamina will collapse even before they finish the race or at the finish line. The possible result of all of this is the sad spectacle of young boys and girls being forced to perform to their maximum but whose immature bodies are not prepared to endure the stress demanded by their sports events. This is plain foolhardy.

Education Secretary Raul Roco, upon advice of the regional directors, said that the athletes are not ready to compete. The standard protocol governing preparation for the Palarong Pambansa is that right after the regional meets, those selected are quartered, provided with coaches, eat regular meals and snacks, receive medical and dental care and given proper training equipment like shoes which are broken in during training so that they will not hurt come competition time. This most important phase of preparing the athletes for competition was not undertaken because of the lack of funds and uncertainty of the date set for the staging of the 2002 Palarong Pambansa. The insistence of Philippine Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain, who was an athlete himself, to hold the Palarong Pambansa despite the concern expressed by Department of Education officials defies logic and appreciation of his motives. As head of the government's agencies responsible for youth sports development, his primary concern should be to ensure the safety and welfare of young sports competitors.

There is no doubt in our mind, as attested to by the DepEd officials, that the athletes participating in the 2002 Palarong Pambansa are unfit to compete and will not be able to perform at their best. Hence, the reason given to justify the holding of the Palarong Pambansa in order to give a chance for the athletes to secure athletic scholarship in college will not be realized. It is possible that the less talented among the participants who had the benefit of the services of a paid coach, good food and equipment provided by affluent parents will perform better than those with greater ability but did not undergo training because the financial assistance from the PSC was given only to the DepEd regional directors last May 16, 2002 and not May 7 as claimed by Buhain.

**—APARICIO H. MEQUI,
president, Philippine Association of Physical Educators Inc. (PAPE), 109 Valenzuela, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City**

Leadership that rejuvenates and heals

IT may be a fruitful pause to consider the person of Pope John Paul II, the head of the Catholic Church, who celebrated his 82nd birthday on May 18 and will enter the 25th year of his pontificate come Oct. 16 of this year. His life has known much sorrow and pain; he has seen much confusion and agitation but he continues to be a source of world leadership that rejuvenates and heals, even if he himself now is old and ailing.

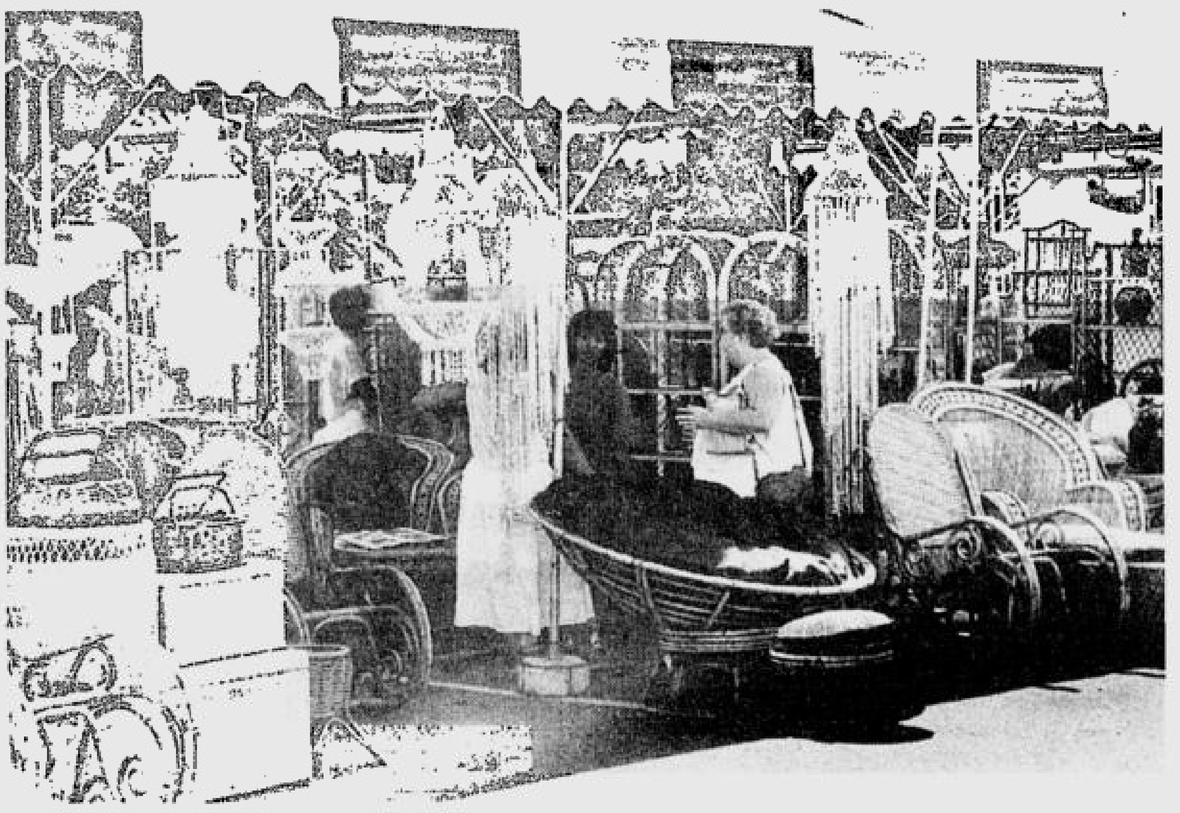
Adversity can divide or unite. The current news about sex abuse scandals among some priests and religious have rocked the world. "This is a distressing time for the Church and for all of us," said the Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano at the start of the meeting of US cardinals and bishops last April in Rome. I believe that this crisis provided Catholics with some much needed glue so we can rally round our leader and from him, find the right direction. John Paul II's stand regarding the sex abuse scandal is clear: "The abuse which has caused this crisis is by every standard wrong and rightly considered a crime by society; it is also an appalling sin in the eyes of God."

He cited further in the same statement that "The abuse of the young is a grave symptom of a crisis affecting not only the Church but society as a whole. It is a deep-seated crisis of sexual morality, even of human relationships, and its prime victims are the family and the young."

Going back to our usual routine in society, John Paul II's words inspire us with youthful dynamism to work in building a wholesome environment for families and young people. Yet, in considering solutions to the crisis, he reminded all that "we cannot forget the power of Christian conversion, that radical decision to turn away from sin and back to God, which reaches to the depths of a person's soul and can work extraordinary change." Yes, John Paul II's leadership truly rejuvenates and heals.

If only many of us could follow his example of using a good measure of prudence and compassion in solving problems, a great number of effective solutions for a better world will be at hand.

—MILDRED ENRIQUEZ MARANAN, A-31 Sambat, San Pascual, Batangas



OFWs should also 'Buy Filipino'

OVERSEAS Filipino workers and seafarers are touted as modern-day heroes because of their contribution to our country's foreign exchange reserves. I would consider them as superheroes if they purchased products made by Filipino labor as *pasalubong*.

There are about two million land-based and sea-based OFWs. If only 1.5 million of them spent an average of $1,000 a year on *pasulubong*, their purchases would come up to almost P40 billion. In 20 years, these would add up to P800 billion. If they spent all that money on Filipino products, our factories will expand and thousands of new jobs would be created. In the process, returning OFWs will find employment here and will not have to work abroad again.

This is exactly what happened in South Korea. In the '60s when that country was still struggling to attain NIC status, many of its workers were employed overseas. Their *pasalubong* were not duty-free goods bought in South Korea. The Korean government's policy then was "buy South Korean-made products." Within 20 years, their factories, which made products ranging from garments to electrical appliances to ships, expanded, creating millions of jobs. Now Koreans do not have to work as OFWs anymore since they are gainfully employed in their own country. There is even a shortage of workers and Filipinos are going there in droves. Now, Hyundai and Daewoo cars and trucks, Goldstar and Samsung TV sets, stereos and VCRs are flooding the Philippine market.

We are familiar with the tale of Filipino OFWs traveling abroad with only one bag and coming home with truckloads of *pasalubong*, either bought abroad or from the duty-free shops conveniently located in so many places in the Philippines. The government's policy of maintaining or even promoting (especially during the previous administration) duty-free shops encourage the Filipinos' "colonial" or "PX" mentality. Instead of patronizing local products, OFWs purchase foreign products in the belief that these are better.

Sending Filipinos abroad to work is a temporary measure; eventually they have to return, swelling the ranks of the unemployed. We should learn from the Korean experience. No country has ever prospered because its government encouraged its citizens to buy imported duty-free goods.

**—GREGORIO M. VITERBO,
36 Maamo St., Sikatuna Village, Quezon City**

All a matter of stress

THIS is to clarify some points mentioned by Lito Zulueta in his article, titled "Pornography of grief on television" last April 7, 2002.

First, it is not true that we deployed our most senior reporter, Jessica Soho, to Palawan to cover Rico Yan's death. Soho was in Palawan on vacation when she learned about the incident. The same holds true with Arnold Clavio who was vacationing in the same resort as Yan.

Second, never did our reporters say "Sa Unggoy ng Duyan," in reference to the late National Artist Lucio San Pedro's work, "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan." Zulueta might have misheard our reporter because of his stress on the second syllable, which is the correct pronunciation.

We thank Zulueta for his insightful article. Rest assured that GMA News shall continue to provide our viewers with the kind and quality of news they deserve.

**—SHEILA PASCUAL-PARAS,
production unit manager for news, GMA News and Public Affairs, Edsa corner Timog Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City**

PPA won't end soon?

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has clarified through the media that the distribution utilities, like Meralco, derive no profits from the purchased power adjustment (PPA) that they collect for the National Power Corp.

We hope this does not mean the ERC is laying down the ground for the continued imposition of the PPA. What the ERC is not saying is that the PPA contracts translate into guaranteed windfall profits—which could be unjustifiable—for the independent power producers (IPPs).

**—MARY JANE MORELOS,
Vista Verde, Cainta**

'Circumstitions'

"ROUTINE male circumcision is NOT necessary!" The capital letters and the exclamation point are in the original statement, a letter from Dr. Reynaldo Joson who chairs the Department of Surgery at the Ospital ng Maynila Medical Center.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Joson wrote me asking if I could help campaign against this *pagtutuli*, especially since it has become a summer ritual sponsored by all sorts of groups from the Catholic Women's League to Kodak Philippines (Smile, you've just been cut!). The "Operation Tuli" banners always intrigue foreigners because really, we are one of the few countries left in the world that insist on, well, let me use a strong term, mutilating our males.

I actually wrote about the circumstitions or myths around circumcision back in 1999. (I'm borrowing the term "circumstitions" from someone named Hugh, a New Zealander who has a website on this controversy. I will give you the address at the end of this article.) At that time, the American Academy of Pediatrics had just issued a statement stating that "the foreskin plays very little or no role in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases," which was the rationale for routine infant circumcision in the States.

Among western countries, it's been mainly the Americans who have clinged on to the practice, with strange reasons. At one time, American doctors thought circumcision could prevent masturbation. Remember that in the 19th century and, I suspect for some moralists in the 21st century, there was this myth that masturbation had harmful effects. Some doctors even thought you could masturbate to death—no wonder they had this mad search for preventive methods.

Then there was this idea that uncircumcized males were "unclean" and that the "dirt" causes diseases in their partners. In fact, Filipinos tend to tease uncircumcized men by wrinkling their noses when they pass by, insinuating that the stench from the "dirt" is so overwhelming. This is of course total nonsense—junior's state of hygiene depends less on a piece of skin than what you do, or don't do, with it. I worry, for example, about how Filipinos avoid taking a bath after sex because they think this causes *pasma*. I think that belief creates more problems of sexual hygiene than being uncut.

In the last few years there has been speculation that circumcision might prevent HIV/AIDS. One theory is that the uncircumcized male's foreskin provides more surface area for the virus to enter but I think this is not very scientific—the virus' entry into the body and its causing an infection, involves more of blood vessels than skin. The bottom line is that Filipino circumcized men are being infected with HIV/AIDS so it may actually be dangerous to propagate the idea that a cut penis protects you from AIDS.

Circumcision in the Philippines persists because of many other folk beliefs. Let me refute them. First, circumcision does not help make a person taller. Once puberty sets in, you will grow with or without circumcision, your height pretty much a function of genetics and nutrition. Second, circumcision does not make you more fertile—how many children you have depends on the quantity and quality of your sperm, and your sense of sexual responsibility. Third, circumcision doesn't give you a longer penis—having a pedro or a pedrito involves a bit of genetics. Nutrition, as far as I know, does not play a significant role. (Some of our readers will remember how they had to bring out a magnifying glass with that superhunk of a partner.) Finally, circumcision doesn't make you a better lover—that you pick up from experience and reading INQUIRER columnists. Moreover, Margy Holmes (who you should also read, even if she isn't in the INQUIRER) will tell you the research shows that the foreskin is exquisitely sensitive and that *supot* males have more pleasurable sexual sensations than their "cut" brothers.

So where does this leave us—*tuli* or not *tuli*? (I just had to reuse that column title from 1999.) Let's hear from our medical experts. Joson wrote his colleagues at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila's Department of Family and Community Medicine for their stand and they agree: "Routine circumcision has no therapeutic basis." The doctors do not recommend infant circumcision and they worry that circumcision done with "bare" health facilities, such as in charity medical missions, may cause more harm than benefit.

At the same time, the doctors recognize the strong cultural pressures to continue the practice. Circumcision is a ritual of passage, with an entire *barkada* of boys on the verge of puberty going through the guillotine together. The doctors recognize, too, the stigma attached to being *supot*, and have this interesting observation: the pressure to circumcize is said to be "psychologically ingrained and culturally embedded in the collective psyche of Filipino women." No wonder sometimes it's mothers who drag their sons, screaming and begging for mercy, to the chopper.

The doctors worry that if they stop circumcizing, there may be more problems because Filipino boys will end up in the hands of traditional practitioners, who will perform the lethal procedure with a bamboo sliver or broken glass, spitting on a wad of guava leaves after the *coup de grâce*.

It looks like circumcision's going to be around in the Philippines for some time. Our doctors will just have to keep speaking out, explaining the risks and disadvantages involved with circumcision including infections, bleeding, reduction of sexual pleasure. At the same time, they will have to keep on explaining that so-called benefits such as increased height, fertility, virility and a long dong are all myths.

Meanwhile, I do recommend you visit www.circumstitions.com, which is both informative and entertaining. (The website's slogan is: A trombone can play more notes than a bugle.) The site includes an entire section on the Philippines. Do note that the site has some photos of cut and intact *manoys* so prudes should just keep out. Uy, finish reading the INQUIRER first.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

East Timor is free at last

AT LAST, the struggle is over and East Timor is free.

The Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor (Apcet) congratulates and salutes the East Timorese people for this happy occasion last May 20, 2002. It is difficult to think how the story of the birth of the Timor Lorosae nation could be more moving, or indeed, more painful.

Today, there are feasts and there are fireworks. These are the smell of freedom—if freedom has a smell. It drifts across the nation—we can say this now—like the fragrance of the glorious East Timor coffee.

It can be heard as well. *"Viva Independente!"* resounds from Taci Tolo, down in the valleys of Matebian and across the plains of Occussi. It can be seen in the marches, the seminars, the sports contests, concerts and the speeches.

And, of course, it can be felt.

World leaders, dignitaries, solidarity activists and media barons flew in, because everyone wanted to be intoxicated with those winsome ideas of independence and of self-determination that prevailed, at last, over those other ideas of realpolitik and pragmatism.

We all want to honor those that died for those ideas. We remember the gallant Falintil fighters and the hardy clandestine cadres who immortalized the unyielding spirit of the people. We remember the young, defiant *estafetas* who symbolized the sturdy and creative character of the future nation and the tireless diplomats who indefatigably kept the torch of hope burning in the streets and along the lonely corridors of power.

We remember the families torn apart, relationships broken, youths without childhood, the years when dignity was defiled, the land scorched and the blood shed. We remember the more than 200,000 East Timorese who perished during the Indonesian occupation up to the post-referendum carnage. We remember the women raped and tortured. We remember the thousands in diaspora and those foreign friends who risked their lives and who were deported, blacklisted, mauled and imprisoned in their solidarity with the East Timorese. And Apcet is humbled to have many of its members counted among them. We remember, lest we forget.

Thus the struggle is won, and the Democratic Republic of East Timor has the adulation of the world, it seems. The future will hold new challenges, complex questions of development, but we hope that none of these obstacles will be as agonizing or as painful as the war of liberation.

Still, it is our fervent hope that East Timor quenches its people's yearnings for justice, even as it works for reconciliation. That it avoids the noose of being in perpetual debt by seeking donors rather than voracious lenders to jumpstart its nascent economy. That it remains steadfast in negotiating the utilization of its natural resources. That it continues to build its democratic institutions and create more spaces for broader peoples' participation in the governance of the nation. That its leaders do not succumb to the haughty muse of power or stray from their mandate to serve the humble needs and aspirations of their heroic people. And that its resolute history is not forgotten or emblazoned in monuments but embedded in the people's hearts.

For indeed, East Timor will be truly free if its people are amply fed, sheltered, clothed and go about their daily lives in peace and dignity. And this will be an enduring struggle long after the tumult of the grand *tebe-tebe* on May 20 have died down.

At last, the struggle is over and another begun. But we know that, as always, the people of East Timor will prevail.

Viva Timor Larosa'e independente!

—ASIA-PACIFIC COALITION FOR EAST TIMOR (Apcet), Dili, Democratic Republic of East Timor

Malacañang clueless on blackout

From page A1

affected the Biñan-Calaca and Sta. Rita plants, causing the massive blackout.

Perez, who is also vice chair of Napocor, yesterday said it was doing its best to avoid another outage of such magnitude.

"Every blackout is different and adjustments have been made after each incident," he said in an interview.

Lawmakers had said the blackout was tantamount to blackmail aimed at forcing consumers to pay the controversial purchased power adjustment (PPA) fee.

But Perez said yesterday: "To say that it was blackmail is totally unfair to consumers. We fully understand the impact of a power outage on the people. No one wants a blackout."

Afable said the President had so far received only a copy of the Department of Energy's press release explaining what had happened.

Perez had promised to give her a "more detailed and comprehensive" report on her return.

Afable said the President was reserving her comments until then.

Privatization

Perez said the persistence of transmission problems underscored the necessity of privatizing the National Transmission Corp. ahead of the power generation plants.

"The situation means a greater drive for prospective investors to take part in Transco's privatization," he said.

He also said investors were thinking that they could solve the problem by upgrading facilities using the technology that they would provide.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said Tuesday's blackout "only indicates the level of efficiency of Napocor."

Drilon cited the "correctness" of privatization "because, presumably, the private sector would be more able to run these plants."

At the press briefing, Meralco vice president Fortunato Leynes noted that the wire systems of Napocor and Meralco were interconnected.

"But we should not blame each other," he said. "What is important is to determine the cause so we can minimize, if not eliminate, the possibility of another blackout."

Leynes said Meralco lost an estimated P120 million because of the blackout. In turn, Napocor vice president Rolando Bacani said the state firm's losses amounted to some P80 million.

Bacani said the occurrence of Luzon-wide blackouts was a reason why Napocor was continuing to upgrade and modernize its transmission lines and substations on the island.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña III said Napocor had taunted the public enough with the persistent blackouts and should now relinquish the responsibility of generating and transmitting power to the more efficient independent power producers (IPPs).

Osmeña had earlier proposed, as part of the remedies being discussed to bring down the cost of electricity, that Napocor "mothball" some of its plants and allow the IPPs to operate at optimum capacity.

During the hearings on the proposed amendments to the Energy Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), Meralco testified that the power it was getting from Napocor was more expensive by at least 60 centavos than that from its IPPs, First Gas and Quezon Power. And yet the two IPPs were not operating at optimum capacity, it was noted.

"So why not just source all the energy from the IPPs that offer power at a cheaper price?" Osmeña said. ***With reports from Rocky Nazareno and Alcuin Papa***

FVR: I'm being treated . . .

From page A1

were partly responsible for the current woes of consumers because they had oversight powers for the review of the IPP contracts.

These contracts gave birth to the purchased power adjustment (PPA), an automatic cost recovery mechanism by power contractors whose cost is eventually passed on to consumers in the form of higher electricity payments.

Short memory

"How short are their memories," Ramos said of the lawmakers, some of whom are also members of the present Congress.

Ramos also lashed out at former President Joseph Estrada, who claimed he had the goods on him on alleged sweetheart deals with IPP contractors.

In a statement issued Tuesday, Estrada claimed that Ramos had asked him to honor midnight deals involving two power projects in Mindanao that the latter approved days before he stepped down in June 1998.

Estrada identified the projects as the Mt. Apo Geothermal Project and the Mindanao Coal I, which have a combined cost of $462 million.

Ramos described Estrada as the "third whammy" that hit the country and ruined the positive economic projections.

The two others, according to Ramos, were the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the El Niño-induced drought that weakened the agriculture sector in 1997-1998.

Ramos said that "it is a bare-faced lie that I (supposedly) visited President Estrada" to lobby for the signing of additional IPP contracts during the latter's term.

Joint session

Ramos said he would appear before the Senate in connection with the power rates controversy only if the committees on energy and on government corporations, chaired by Sen. Renato Cayetano and Sen. John Osmeña respectively, held a joint session.

"But I'm asking them to put their acts together," Ramos said, noting that Osmeña had invited him through a letter while Cayetano, the ex-President's former chief legal counsel, had not.

"Is one trying to bypass the other?" Ramos said.

He said the Senate should also invite past and present energy officials. "I'm still studying my answer to the letter of Senator Osmeña," Ramos said.

An inter-agency committee is reviewing the contracts with the IPPs.

Covanta owes Napocor P248M

At the House of Representatives, Napocor officials confirmed that Covanta, through MCI, owed Napocor as of May 20, 2002 P248 million for the electricity that it purchased from Napocor.

The figures actually came from Akbayan Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales who told the House energy committee that she got it from Napocor.

Napocor officer in charge Roland Quilala initially said that MCI owed Napocor P223 million but later told Rosales that her figures were correct.

MCI has a 10-year contract starting 1995 to provide electric power to Cavite Epza. Rosales said that Peza officials had asked for the termination of the MCI contract because of its failure to provide Epza electricity. MCI has since sought a court injunction on the Epza bid.

Oliver Cruz, director of Covanta, told the hearing that he did not know the details of MCI's obligations to Napocor. But he said "we are current on our payables."

Results

Upon the prodding of Misamis Oriental Rep. Oscar Moreno, Justice Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee promised to supply the energy committee a copy of the results of the review done by the IPP review committee on the initial batch of 10 IPP contracts, including that of Covanta.

Teehankee is a member of the IPP review committee, which is tasked with assessing the contracts that Napocor entered into with 35 IPPs.

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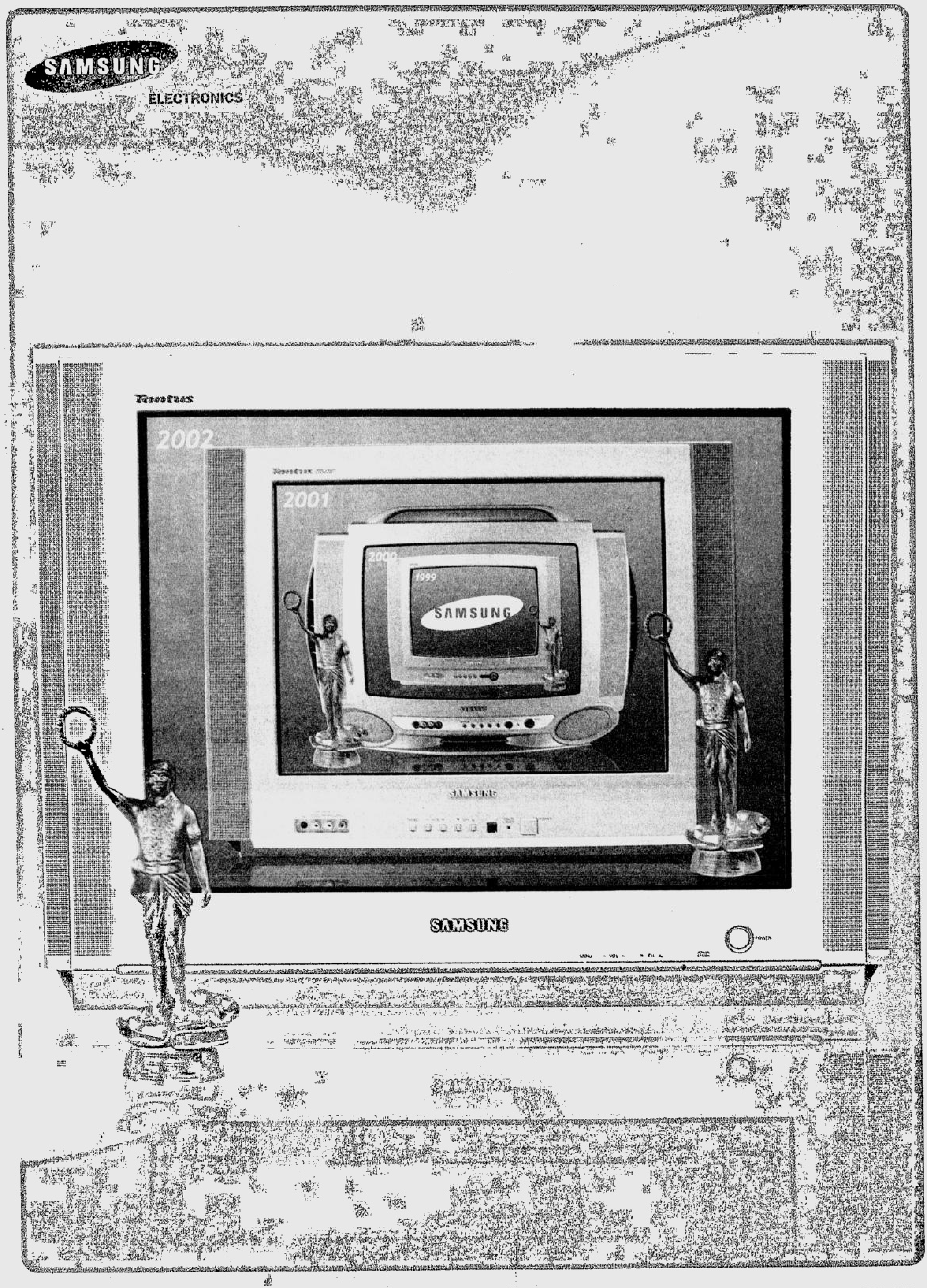

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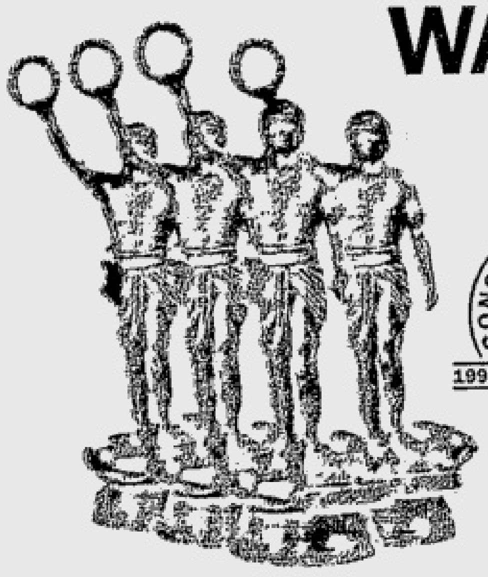

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GMA faces Pulag curse

From page A1

security requirements of her planned foray, she might also be the first President to be cursed by Pulag's pantheon of Ibaloi gods.

Members of the Ibaloi tribe of Benguet have been debating on Ms Macapagal's visit after being advised that it might disrupt the mountain's fragile ecology.

Superstitious folk are also fearful that the visit will disturb the mountain spirits.

Pulag, which rises 2,922 meters above sea level, is regarded as the sacred home of some 50 Ibaloi gods and goddesses. It is Luzon's highest mountain and, next to Davao's Mt. Apo, the second highest in the country.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has declared it a national integrated protected area.

The President's visit, tentatively scheduled on June 5, is supposed to be part of her promotional tour of potential tourist spots in the country.

But security considerations require her and her party to fly by helicopter straight to state-protected grassland. From there, it's an hour's hike to Pulag's peak.

The helicopter will be perched on 804 hectares of grassland that is home to indigenous dwarf bamboos and the famous cloud rat.

Pulag's average temperature of 7 degrees Celsius has nurtured some of the country's most fragile species of flora and fauna.

About two-thirds of the mountain is covered with mossy forests and rare orchid species. Toward the peak, the mountain hosts about 70 bird species.

"We expect more people to join the President," said a worried Augusto Lagon, DENR assistant regional executive director for operations. "We know all the mayors will show up there. The big number of people (who will join Ms Macapagal) could overwhelm the carrying capacity of Mt. Pulag . . . People may trample on the flora."

Invaders

The President's chopper will not be the first "metal invader" of Pulag. According to Lagon, forest rangers chased away a private helicopter that tried to land on the grassland in 1998.

"We are not really worried about the helicopters," he said. "We are more worried about the people who will go there."

But Benguet Prosecutor Felix Cabading, an environmentalist and an elder of Benguet's Kalanguya tribe, pointed out that Malacañang should take care not to ignore cultural and environmental concerns involving Pulag.

Cabading said that while the Kalanguya tribe was not against tourism, there were "very diverse laws protecting the mountain, whether (these be) the government's environmental law or the cultural laws of the tribes surrounding (Pulag)."

He added: "Mt. Pulag is not just a mountain but a mountain range that affects tribes (in Benguet, Mountain Province and even Nueva Vizcaya).

"(The Kalanguya, Karao, Ibaloi and Kankaney) communities have their own sacred spots on that mountain, which they cherish, and which the government should have already come to terms with after it applied the environment protection law on (Pulag)."

Cabading spoke of the "many stories about how vengeful Pulag spirits targeted disrespectful visitors," and cited the case of an engineer who supposedly vanished on the mountain trail in December 2001.

"We don't want that happening now (to the President)," he said.

First-time trekkers are enjoined to speak softly while negotiating the mountain trail. They are told by residents and by DENR forest rangers to maintain latrines an hour's trek away from the summit.

Residents also forbid trekkers to engage in any intimate activity there. "Even a kiss is forbidden," a Pulag guide told the INQUIRER.

Impact of tourism

But environmentalists are more concerned about the impact of the President's tourism promotions on the mountain ecology.

The Kalanguya tribe has objected to a proposed measure, filed by Benguet Rep. Samuel Dangwa, seeking to develop Pulag into a tourism destination.

"There are too many variables when you have people trooping religiously to this mountain," a Kalanguya elder said. "This is heavily protected, and we already have problems dealing with the regular trekkers."

But Purificacion Molintas, Department of Tourism director in the Cordillera, said: "Why don't we let the President climb the mountain, just like what we did last summer?"

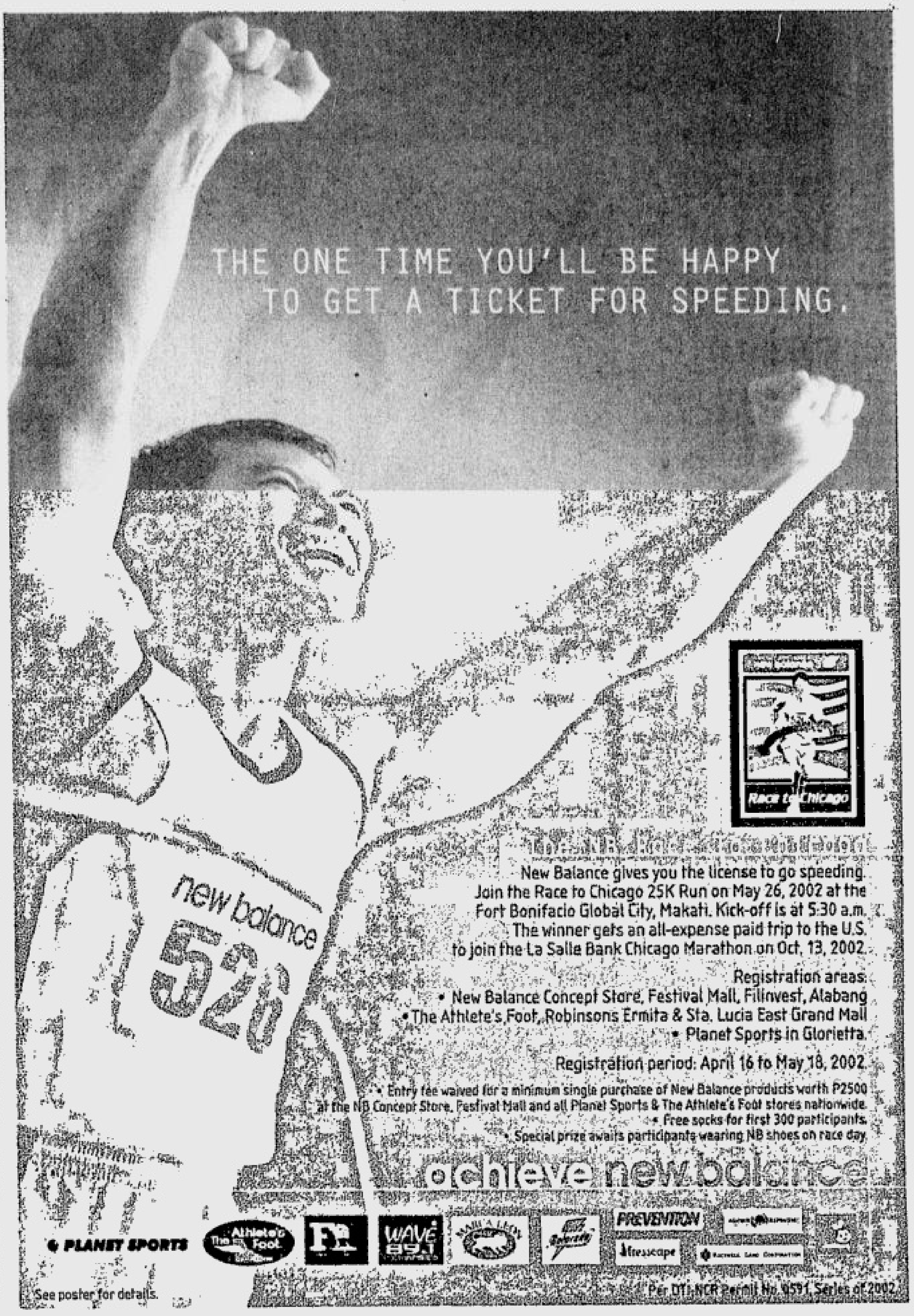
She was referring to the pilgrimage climb sponsored by a local media group last April.

Like every Pulag trekker, the President will undergo a briefing before she and her party embark on the climb.

"We have to remind her that this is a sacred mountain," Molintas said. "We also have to identify the zones that will be reachable by her vehicle, the site for (potential) development, and the specific site for trekking."

Molintas said it was the Presidential Management Staff, Cordillera Tourism Press Corps and Philippine Information Agency that came up with the plan to take Ms Macapagal to Pulag.

She said the President was promoting ecotourism and was scheduled to interact with the Kalanguya community after her trek. ***Reports from Desiree Caluza, Jovelyn Reyes and Vincent Cabreza***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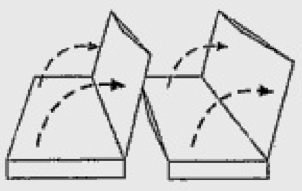
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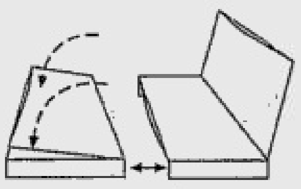
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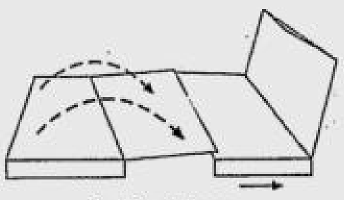
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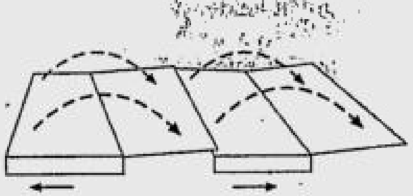
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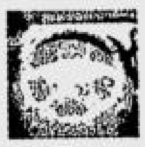
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

7 countries accused of promoting terrorism

WASHINGTON—The US Department of State branded Iran the world's most active sponsor of terror Tuesday as the Islamic fundamentalist state intensified support for Palestinian militants attacking Israel.

On the other hand, Libya and Sudan were taking steps "to get out of the terrorism business" and North Korea and Syria took smaller steps in that direction, but continued to host militant groups, the department said in its annual report to Congress.

The report named seven states as sponsors of terror, including Cuba and Iraq, the latter concentrating its terror on opponents of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein but also providing bases for anti-Israel terror groups.

"The terrorist threat is global in scope, many-faceted and determined," Secretary of State Colin Powell said. "The campaign against terrorism must be equally comprehensive." *AP*

PRAMAHA Sayanjerasutho, 37, holds an AK-47 rifle at a security office in Parliament House in Bangkok. He was captured after he stormed Parliament and took 20 hostages. AFP

Monk arrested after storming Thai Parliament

BANGKOK—A young Buddhist monk was arrested Wednesday after storming Thailand's Parliament with an assault rifle, taking about 30 people hostage and demanding to speak with the prime minister. No one was injured.

After a one-hour standoff during which he berated authorities by mobile phone and fired an AK-47 assault rifle into the air once, the monk was captured by three plainclothes police posing as reporters who grabbed the gun and handcuffed him.

The monk, who wore a traditional saffron yellow robe, said he was from a province in southeastern Thailand and was in his 20s.

Before being arrested, he demanded to be allowed to talk with Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, saying that he wanted to protest "unjust treatment" he suffered when arrested by police several years ago.

Speaking into a reporter's mobile phone, the monk said in a lengthy speech that was broadcast live on radio and television that he was arrested in 1996 for trespassing in a national park and was beaten and stripped by police. He said that authorities had not responded to his complaints.

The chaos began at about 8:30 a.m., just minutes before Thailand's 500-member elected lower house was set to debate a much-anticipated no-confidence motion against 15 Cabinet members in Prime Minister Thaksin's 14-month-old government.

A woman entering the Parliament building to listen to the debate said that the monk threatened to kill her and others.

"He stormed into the reception office where I was and said, 'Don't move or you'll get yourself killed,'" said Pratuang Mongkolsil, 53. "Then the monk went out and shot once and came back. I was so frightened."

The monk identified himself as Sayan Chitasuro from southeastern Chanthaburi province, bordering Cambodia.

Before entering the Parliament building, he waited outside overnight with the assault rifle concealed in his robe, he said.

Police said the suspect had been registered as a Buddhist monk at a temple in Chanthaburi province.

He faces charges of illegal weapons possession, breaking into a government office and illegal detention, which carry a penalty of up to 20 years in prison, said Pol. Col. Luechai Sutyod. He was defrocked after his arrest Wednesday. *AP*

Anthrax scare hits World Bank

WASHINGTON—More than a thousand World Bank employees worked from home after an anthrax scare, and its sister agency, the International Monetary Fund, found evidence of spores in its mail room.

One hundred IMF employees and four World Bank employees were taking antibiotics as a precaution, officials said late Tuesday.

With no discernible progress on the investigation months after the anthrax letter attacks, the FBI prepared to give lie detector tests to current and former workers at a pair of Army medical labs where the microbes are on hand.

At Fort Detrick, Maryland, officials were reviewing a defense department proposal for stepping up security at the germ warfare defense lab, which has considerable anthrax stores. The goal: Secure biological agents as tightly as the nation secures chemical and nuclear material.

The directive, still in draft form, focuses on safe handling of the biological agents, screening personnel who have access to the material, securing the physical plant and tracking methods to account for supplies, said Caree Vander Linden, spokesperson for US Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. *AP*

Rumsfeld says al-Qaida will inevitably get nuke arms

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush warned on Tuesday that al-Qaida terrorists still "want to hurt us," while his Pentagon chief said terrorists inevitably would acquire weapons of mass destruction from countries like Iraq, Iran or North Korea.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, too, said "terrorists are trying every way they can" to get nuclear, chemical or biological weapons—his words part of the latest of a round of alarms from Bush's administration.

Authorities tightened security around New York City landmarks after the FBI warned of uncorroborated information from detainees that sites such as the Statue of Liberty might be attacked.

Despite the increased concerns, the White House said it was not raising the nationwide terrorism alert status because intelligence on possible attacks is too vague. In an interview with Italy's RAI television, Bush echoed the general warnings given by administration officials in recent days.

"The al-Qaida still exists, they still hate America and any other country which loves freedom and they want to hurt us," Bush said. "They're nothing but a bunch of cold-blooded killers."

Bush said that if the government got a specific threat, "we would have used our assets to harden" the target.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said terrorists were sure to obtain chemical, biological or nuclear weapons through their links with countries trying to develop them. He mentioned Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya and North Korea as possible sources.

"Just facing the facts, we have to recognize that terrorist networks have relationships with terrorist states that have weapons of mass destruction and that they inevitably are going to get their hands on them, and they would not hesitate one minute in using them," Rumsfeld said. *AP*

Arafat's support falters amid demands for reform

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Yasser Arafat is at his weakest position in years as Palestinian leader, with his popularity down and his people clamoring for reform. Yet despite widespread grumbling, no serious challenger has emerged, according to political analysts and a new opinion poll released Tuesday.

Marwan Barghouti, viewed as the street leader of the Palestinian uprising, is the front-runner among potential contenders—but he's been sitting in an Israeli jail since the Army snatched him last month during a sweep through the West Bank.

Criticism of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority he leads is becoming increasingly open as conditions in the Palestinian area continue to deteriorate after almost 20 months of Mideast fighting.

The uprising, intended to move the Palestinians toward statehood, has so far failed to do that. Arafat has supported the uprising and is seen as reluctant to call it off without having tangible gains to offer his people.

"The belief in the street is that (Arafat) is not projecting leadership, that it is not clear what he wants," said Khalil Shikaki, regarded as the leading Palestinian pollster. "He has failed on two challenges—ending (Israeli) occupation and building a democratic state."

Yet there is no real replacement waiting in the wings, and there won't be as long as the conflict with Israel continues, according to Shikaki. Arafat "will continue to be seen as the embodiment of aspirations of ending occupation. As long as Arafat lives, there will be no second man."

Arafat has the support of 35 percent of Palestinians, according to Shikaki's poll. That's down from around 70 percent after he was elected six years ago, and 46 percent in July 2000, before the outbreak of fighting with Israel. His approval rating has been in the 30s for the past year. *AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, May 23, 2002
7th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	**James 5:1-6**
Gospel:	**Mk 9:41-50**

Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone gives you a drink of water because you belong to Christ and bear his name, truly, I say to you, he will not go without reward.

If anyone should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck.

If your hand makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a hand than with two hands to go to hell, to the fire that never goes out. And if your foot makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than with both feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye makes you fall into sin, tear it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than, keeping both eyes, to be thrown into hell where the *worms that eat them never die, and the fire never goes out.* The fire itself will preserve them.

Salt is a good thing; but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another."

Commentary

What causes you to sin, to separate from God? What causes your conscience to go astray and make others who seem honest to fall? Identify those causes and try to eliminate them. We must be aware of personal and social sins: our materialism, selfishness and greed, or the corruption, violence and unjust structures in our society. It is better to enter life without any of these things that seem to be part of us. Jesus stresses here the incomparable value of eternal life. At times to gain the Kingdom has demanded from some committed Christians to sacrifice even their job, their security and their life. The real world created by God and which God is saving is not to be an oasis of happiness but a place where free persons grow through their struggles and renunciations.

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REMEMBERING MAO SPEECH REUTERS/CHINA PHOTO

Chinese dancers perform to commemorate the 60th anniversary of Mao Zedong's "Speech at theYanan Literature and Art Forum" in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou on May 21. Chinese authorities have a launched a nationwide campaign commemorating Mao's speech aimed at bringing arts and culture to the masses in line with President Jiang Zemin's "Three Represents" theory.

Palestinian militants leave Cyprus for asylum in 6 countries

LARNACA, Cyprus—Under tight security, 12 Palestinian militants exiled by Israel left Cyprus on Wednesday aboard two European planes bound for six EU nations that have agreed to offer them temporary asylum.

Eleven of the militants, expelled under a deal that ended Israel's siege at the Church of the Nativity, boarded a bus outside the beach-front hotel where they had been confined since May 10 for a short ride to Larnaca airport. They traveled under tight security by Cypriot anti-terror police, dressed in black or camouflaged uniforms and with dogs sniffing for explosives, and entered the airport from a side gate.

Another Palestinian, Mohammed Said, rode in an ambulance after he was hospitalized overnight with a stomach ulcer. As the car parked next to an Italian executive jet, Said, escorted by a nurse, was helped by a Cypriot policeman to the plane to Italy with two other Palestinians. The plane departed shortly afterward.

On arrival at the airport, the Palestinians waved a Palestinian flag from the bus and flashed V-for-victory signs.

After disembarking from the bus, they hugged and kissed each other goodbye and waved to reporters. Nine of them left aboard a Spanish military aircraft and three left aboard the Italian plane. One of them, Jihad Jaara, whose leg was broken by an Israeli sniper bullet, was walking on crutches.

On the tarmac, the Palestinian representative to Cyprus, Samir Abu Ghazaleh, bid farewell to the men. "It's very difficult for people to leave their homeland like this," he said, referring to their departure from Bethlehem.

A 13th Palestinian, Abdullah Daoud, 41, head of the Palestinian intelligence service in Bethlehem and the most senior among the militants, stayed behind in Cyprus until an EU member accepts him. *AP*

US, Russia forge closer cooperation

WASHINGTON—By putting in writing their plans to cut strategic nuclear weapons, the United States and Russia may be clearing a path for closer cooperation on other security issues, including early warning of missile launches.

One promising project is the Russian-American Observation Satellite, or Ramos. Now a decade old, the program to launch two heat-sensing satellites for detection of missile launches has been slowed by an uncertain US-Russian political relationship, according to officials involved in monitoring the project.

"Quite frankly, we haven't made as much progress as I would like because a lot of things get in our way—certainly not the technology issues but other issues," Air Force Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish, director of the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency, said in a recent interview.

Satellites and other means of detecting and tracking missiles in flight are crucial to defending against attack. Interceptor rockets cannot work properly if they aren't cued to their target in time.

"I'd like to see that and other things expanded if we could work with the Russians . . . on this problem (of missile defense) because they face the same dangers we do," he added. "My hope is that we would be working with them a lot more than we have in the past."

The Russians have long opposed US plans to erect defenses against long-range missiles, asserting that it would lead to a renewed arms race and potentially undermine the deterrent effect of Russia's offensive nuclear force. They also opposed US withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, which bans national missile defenses, but this week's summit is designed in part to set those differences aside.

The treaty President George W. Bush and President Vladimir Putin are to sign during their meetings in Moscow spells out nuclear arms reductions that Bush intended to order even if there had been no Russian agreement. *AP*

Iran casts dragnet for Barbie

TEHRAN—The suspect fits the following description: slim, curvaceous, perpetual smile, no head scarf. Goes by the name of Barbie.

Iranian police are combing the shelves for the perky ambassador of American culture. The doll's uneasy sojourn in the Islamic Republic could be drawing to a close.

Agents have been confiscating Barbie from toy stores since a vague proclamation earlier this month denouncing the un-Islamic sensibilities of the idol of girls worldwide, shopkeepers said Tuesday.

"They took them all," said a toy seller whose shop window is plastered with the flower-shaped Barbie logo. "I have no idea if we'll ever see Barbie back again."

The shop owner refused to give her name, fearing more trouble with authorities. Other toy dealers also asked for anonymity. The Barbie ban apparently has them spooked.

Could the Little Mermaid and the rest of the Disney clan be next?

"We're all a little nervous," said a toy shop clerk who admitted they stashed their Barbie stock after learning of the sweep.

It's not the first time Barbie has run afoul with authorities. In 1996, the head of a government-backed children's agency called Barbie a "Trojan horse" sneaking in Western influences such as makeup and revealing clothes.

Barbie is sold wearing swimsuits and miniskirts in a society where women must wear head scarves in public and men and women are not allowed to go to the pool or beach together.

In March, Iranian toy makers answered back with Sara. The moonfaced doll is clad in an Islamic chador or traditional Iranian folk costumes. Her twin brother Dara is also the picture of Iranian propriety—a far cry from Barbie's beefcake boyfriend Ken.

Government officials have not elaborated on the reasons behind the Barbie crackdown.

But it's widely perceived as another pinpoint strike by conservatives. The expanding personal and commercial liberties since the rise of reformist President Mohammad Khatami in 1997 have left his opponents feeling weak and isolated.

On Monday, the hardline newspaper Jam-e-Jam ran a front-page story accusing a popular Tehran fast-food restaurant of selling "American sandwiches." The restaurant uses third-country suppliers that distribute products of the US chain Hardee's.

Barbie and other US products enter Iran through similar roundabout channels, skirting the ban on direct trade imposed by Washington for Iran's alleged support of international terrorism.

Toy shops are filled with Disney items. Markets sell well-known American brands such as Gillette, Xerox and Coca-Cola.

The Barbie purge hits some shopkeepers right in the cash register.

Barbie, made by Mattel Inc., is a best seller despite the cost: about $40 in a nation where the average monthly salary is about $100. An Iranian-made Barbie knockoff is about $3. Sara and Dara go for about $15 each. **AP**

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Cyberspace cops in Egpyt target gays

CAIRO—A website devoted to homosexual issues in Egypt includes this warning: "Guess who's watching? Egyptian State Security!"

Egypt's gays, an ongoing police target, aren't the only web surfers who should beware.

In recent months, Egyptian police also arrested a web designer who posted a poem deemed politically suspect and a student who used the Internet to spread what officials said were false rumors.

"The new millennium came with unexpected changes in the use of technology in committing crimes. We had to respond," said Gen. Abdel-Wahab el-Adly, the Egyptian police official in charge of vice.

"We are dealing with a different type of criminal and the spread of new crimes," added Gen. Ahmed Shehab, who handles information technology for the police ministry. "This requires security and technical expertise to be able to patrol the Internet the same way we patrol Egyptian streets."

As part of the effort, police have gone online masquerading as gay men seeking partners, placing ads on sites that cater to gay Egyptians. Police arrested men in recent months who responded to the ads.

"We got 19 cases this way," el-Adly bragged. "It was great arresting them."

Human rights advocates say Egypt is simply using new technology in an old campaign against freedoms.

"We think it is really scandalous that Egyptian authorities are using the Internet to muzzle freedom of expression," said Virginie Locoussol, head of the Middle East Desk of Reporters Sans Frontiers.

"If the state controls everything, then it is a police state."

RSF's upcoming report "Enemies of the Internet," expected in September, will cite Egypt for the first time, Locoussol said. **AP**

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Previous Job
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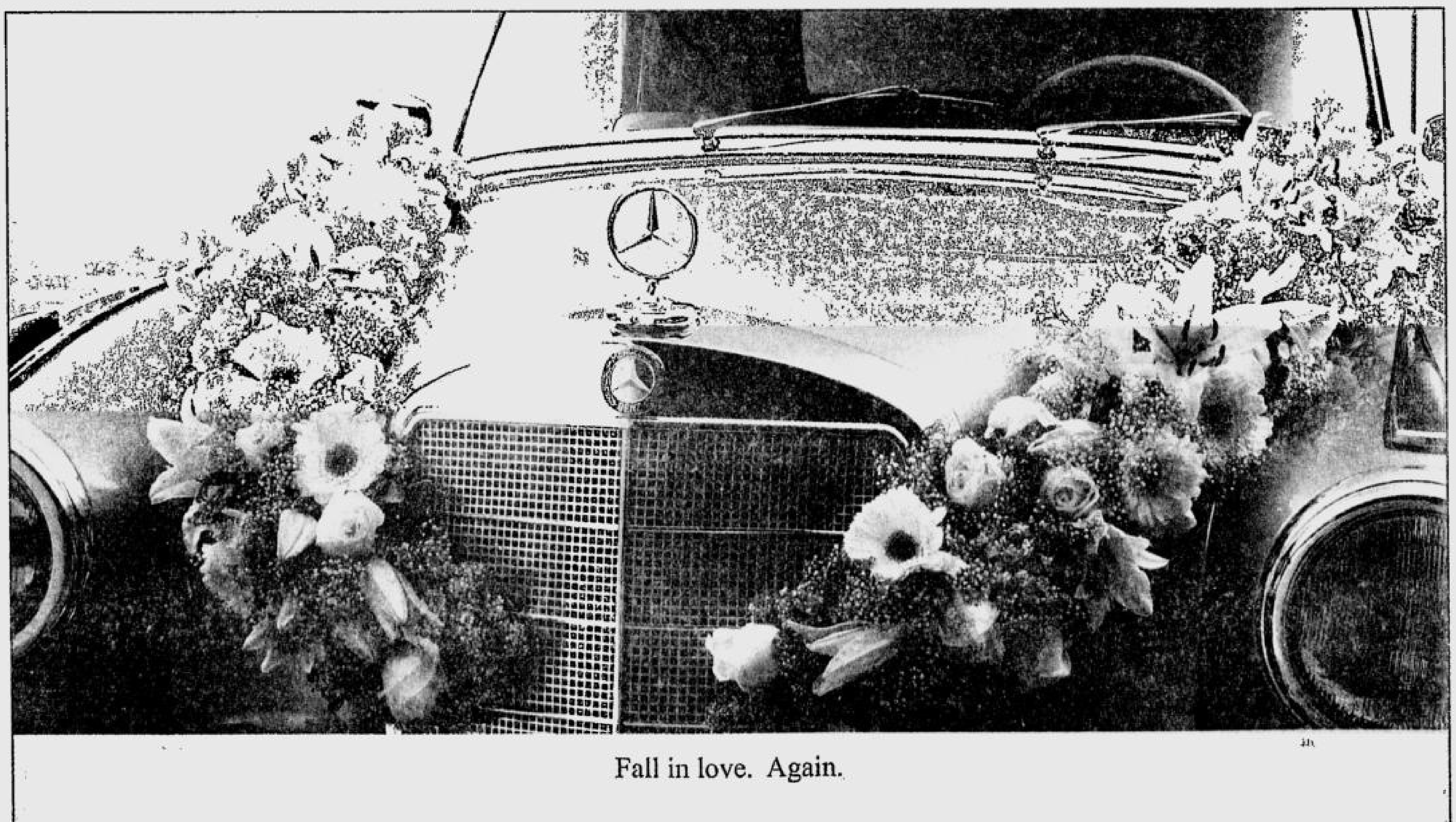
Colombia fighting kills 9

BOGOTA, Colombia—Warfare between security forces and suspected leftist guerrillas erupted in Colombia's second-largest city, leaving at least eight people dead, including two children and an elderly man.

The fighting in Medellin on Tuesday was touched off by a raid by hundreds of soldiers, police and federal agents backed by combat helicopters against rebels they believed were hiding in one of the hillside slums ringing the city. Two girls caught in the crossfire, aged 2 and 4, were among those killed, police said.

The other seven casualties were believed to be urban rebels, said Army Gen. Mario Montoya. But local residents who brought one body into a Medellin hospital on a stretcher pulled back the blanket covering the corpse, revealing it to be that of an elderly man.

"Look! He's just an old man," one of the civilians carrying the body shouted to a TV cameraman. **AP**



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Bomb explodes outside radio station

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A bomb which police said was homemade exploded at the Bombo Radyo station along Corales Avenue here yesterday dawn.

Chief Supt. Felicisimo Khu Jr., city police chief, said the bomb was placed below the signage of the Bombo Radyo.

The explosion damaged the signage.

The police's Task Force Detonator gathered only a bulb terminal, aluminum foil, ammonium, nitrate, white cement and electrical wirings from what was left of the bomb. No blasting caps or splinters were found in the blast site.

Khu said the bomb was not intended to injure or kill anyone and may have been intended to threaten journalists at Bombo Radyo as it happened while people were asleep.

Mayor Vicente Emano ordered an investigation of the attack.

"We have worked so hard to lure investors and yet here comes this incident that we dread not to (sic) happen in the city. This is a setback (for) all that we have worked for," a visibly irate Emano told Bombo Radyo.

Michael Bustamante, Bombo Radyo assistant station manager, said it was "clear that some groups out there are after our lives."

Bustamante said the bombing would not stop them from exposing wrongdoings on air.

Last year, the same station was fired at by M16 Armalite rifle-wielding men.

With the latest bombing, Emano had asked the Sangguniang Panlungsod to adapt measures to ensure that security was tight in the city through the revival of the gun ban law.

He said the military and the police would be authorized to arrest any person carrying a gun.

"This gun ban will deter (the) possible entrance of the terrorists who have sown terror in some key cities in Mindanao and I do not want that to happen in the city," Emano said.

In Baganga, Davao Oriental, unidentified men on Sunday night burned a station of the Radyo Natin, which is owned by the Manila Broadcasting Company.

Supt. Catalino Cuy, provincial police chief, said they were not ruling out the involvement of the communist rebels in the attack.

But an official of Radyo Natin-Baganga, who asked not to be identified for security reasons, said there was no reason for the New People's Army to burn the station.

"They (NPA) are friends," the Radyo Natin official said, adding that some officials of the municipal government could be behind the attack.

Radyo Natin has been criticizing Baganga town Mayor Jerry Morales, who ordered the closure of the station for six months last year.

"We are also looking into the possible involvement of Mayor Morales since it is public knowledge that he was very much irked over the critical commentaries of the radio station," Cuy told the INQUIRER.

The bomb explosion at the Bombo Radyo office came on the heels of the discovery of a bomb at a coliseum in Bacolod City that was packed with 5,000 people watching a game of the Metropolitan Basketball Association.

The bomb was placed near LPG tanks at the back of the coliseum. Police discreetly searched for the bomb to avoid a stampede and detonated it outside. ***Grace Cantal-Albasin and Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

New mayor takes oath as incumbent hangs on

CASTILLEJOS, Zambales—While unseated Mayor Wilma Billman and 50 of her supporters barricaded the mayor's office here on Tuesday, Enrique Magsaysay took his oath as the town's new mayor.

Magsaysay was installed as mayor by virtue of an order from Judge Eliodoro Ubiadas, who declared the nephew of the late President Ramon Magsaysay winner over Billman in last year's local elections.

The new mayor took his oath before lawyer Jun Cesa after receiving a writ of execution from Ubiadas shortly before 3 p.m.

While Magsaysay was taking his oath on the hall's corridor, Billman's supporters, who had been barricading since Sunday the second floor, where the mayor's office is located, were jeering at the proceedings.

"*Ibigay ang tunay na katarungan para sa bayan ng* Catillejos. *Igalang ang karapatan at demokrasya* (Give justice to Castillejos. Respect rights and democracy)," they said.

Billman said she would not step down until the issue was finally resolved.

"The decision of the court is not the people's voice and I am bound to protect our rights come what may," she said.

Ubiadas of the Olongapo regional trial court unseated Billman after nullifying 1,409 ballots cast in her favor.

The judge said the court found "almost identical" marks in most of the 1,409 ballots counted for Billman. The nullified ballots were deducted from the 3,981 votes credited to her, making Magsaysay the winner. Magsaysay garnered 3,595 votes.

Not even Gov. Vicente Magsaysay, a native of this town, could convince Billman to vacate the mayor's office. The governor left the municipal hall without saying a word.

Sheriff Aquilano Nanquil said Billman just ignored the writ of execution when it was served to her.

Mayor Magsaysay, who is now occupying the vice mayor's office, said he had asked Billman and her supporters to have a dialogue with him but his offer was rejected. ***Cesar Villa, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

FERTILITY DANCE

JOAN BONDOC

The belief lingers on in Obando, Bulacan, that women who want to bear children would have a greater chance of doing so by offering their dance to three religious icons—San Pascual, Sta. Clara and Virgen de Salambao—on the streets of the town.

Tribal folk flee 'hamletting' in Agusan village

SAN LUIS, Agusan del Sur—Carrying whatever possessions they could take with them, Banwaon *lumads*, originally from the village of Tabon-Tabon escaped to Barangay Balit here after soldiers and militiamen from the 36th IB forced them to relocate to Km. 29 where a military detachment is located.

Men, women and children walked for 10 kilometers before local officials could secure a minitruck and several motorcycles, using the vehicles to ferry the evacuees to Balit.

Villagers said they were forced to flee, shortly after the military forcibly brought them to Km. 29 because of fear for their safety.

They said Army soldiers and militiamen regularly harass them inside the hamlet through indiscriminate firing.

The villagers also complained that they were going hungry inside the hamlet and that some of them have become sick.

The hamletting started on May 3 on orders of Mario Napungahan, a militia leader in Barangay Mahagsay, where Tabon-Tabon belongs, as a form of punishment to the villagers.

The Banwaons said Napungahan suspected they were coddling New People's Army guerrillas in their village.

"We did not want to relocate because we would not be able to tend our farms, but Napungahan threatened to kill all of us if we fail to comply," Datu Manbalanyo, a tribal leader, told the INQUIRER.

Because of fear, Manbalanyo said they petitioned the local government to check the reports of abuses committed by soldiers and militiamen against the villagers.

In the same petition, the Banwaons also asked officials to disband the paramilitary group in their village.

"There is no peace and security for us if we return while they (militiamen) are still there," Mario Man-uliohan, the sitio leader, said.

Acting on the petition, the Sangguniang Bayan here summoned Napungahan to explain the hamletting.

But he only repeated his earlier allegation that the villagers were protecting the NPA.

"After the NPAs killed (a militiaman) and harassed our detachments I ordered a close monitoring of the Tabon-Tabon villagers because I know they are involved with the NPA," he said.

Manbalanyo, however, denied any involvement with the NPA, saying the villagers were ordinary civilians caught in the crossfire.

Meanwhile, Capt. Emmanuel Aguaviva, spokesperson of the 402nd Brigade, expressed surprise at the hamletting.

ADB exec seeks more positive news

DAVAO CITY—A top official of the Asian Development Bank on Sunday asked media to also report positive news about Mindanao to bring tourists and investors from other parts of the world to the region.

Jacques Ferreira, senior programs officer on Governance, Finance and Trade Division of the ADB Southeast Asian Department, said media play a crucial role in inviting investors and developing trade relations in the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines (BIMP) area.

Ferreira said the peace and order situation in Mindanao is a serious matter that needs to be addressed very seriously, while social concerns need to be addressed from a different point of view.

He said the government must address peace and order questions. But people should also not lose sight of economic and social developments.

While security matters affect people, Ferreira said, positive developments in Mindanao also need to be reported.

Ferreira emphasized the need to also report positive developments in efforts to improve the quality of life of the country's poor. The ADB official was here for a meeting of the national secretariat of the BIMP to carve out the destiny of different working groups in the area.

"BIMP . . . Mindanao is yours. Remember how you are going to invite people from other parts of the world . . . how to bring people to come here and develop BIMP-Eaga (East Asean Growth Area)," Ferreira told reporters during the Club 888 Forum at the Marco Polo Hotel.

He said if the Eaga would be projected as a war zone area, nobody would come.

The ADB official also admitted that the government cannot implement development projects if there are peace and order concerns. ***Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Man killed for stopping robbery in bus declared hero

COTABATO CITY—An elderly man, who admonished an armed group of youngsters who held up a bus in Pagalungan, Maguindanao, on Monday, has been declared a "hero" by a transport firm after he was gunned down for saving the bus' other passengers from being robbed.

Efren Fernandez, 56, of Kabacan, Cotabato, was among the passengers of a Davao City-bound Eric bus No. 28 of the Weena Transport Inc., which was held up around 8:30 a.m. by five pistol-wielding young men along the highway of Barangay Igam in Pagalungan.

Senior Insp. Mamaluba Guiamalon, Pagalungan police chief, said Fernandez suffered three bullet wounds in the chest when the suspects shot him after he refused to let go of his belongings.

"You are young. Why do you have to rob when you can earn through honest living," passengers quoted Fernandez as telling the suspects while the young men were robbing the bus passengers.

The suspects, posing as passengers, boarded the bus in Pikit, Cotabato.

"He could have been alive today if he allowed himself to be divested of his cash," said Guiamalon.

Guinaid Adam Jr., Weena-Cotabato manager, said Fernandez's heroic deed saved other passengers from being robbed.

"Only about one-fourth of the total number of passengers were victimized, one of whom lost P30,000 in cash," said Adam.

Adam said he ordered the release of an undetermined amount of cash to Fernandez's family.

He said Fernandez was a "hero."

The Weena management has agreed to shoulder the victim's funeral expenses. ***Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Lone gunman robs bank

BACOLOD CITY—An unidentified armed man robbed a rural bank in Ilog town, Negros Occidental on Sunday and casually left on board a tricycle, bringing with him P109,279 in cash, police said Tuesday.

Ilog police investigators were pursuing the inside job angle in what they described as a "strange" bank robbery.

The theory was arrived at because the heist was reported to the police precinct in Barangay Dancalan, which was located just 200 meters from the bank, about 45 minutes after the robbery happened.

Senior Supt. Geary Barias, provincial police director, said the suspect did not even bother to wear a bonnet while inside the Ilog Rural Bank, while the four bank employees opened the cash vault and turned over the money to the robber without resistance.

Insp. Fidel Fortaleza, Ilog police chief, said the lone robber barged into the bank while its four employees, including the manager identified as Seth Gepelago, were doing overtime work. ***Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

2 'lumad' leaders face raps for massacre

BAGANGA, Davao Oriental—Two Mandaya tribal leaders, who led a '*pangayao*' or tribal war against New People's Army rebels in the province, were charged with murder for the infamous Baganga Massacre here last year, where their followers killed at least eight people suspected of being rebels.

The charges were filed by survivors of the massacre against Pedro and Romeo Mapando before the Regional Trial Court Branch 5 in Mati town.

The human rights group Karapatan in Southern Mindanao assisted the complainants.

Zaldy Matibay, 14, Larry Aumada, 14 and Boy Capungas, 15, all residents of Barangay Binondo here, said the Mapandos ordered them and eight other persons held on Sept. 15 last year.

"The anti-NPA tribal warriors brought us to Barangay Pichon in Caraga town. They placed us all in a hut and shot us, killing instantly Diosdada Silat, her husband Eddie and her 9-year-old daughter Lorena," a sobbing Matibay said in the vernacular.

The Silat family owned the hut.

During the shooting, Matibay said he was able to escape with Aumada and Capungas.

He said they hid in a mountainous portion of Barangay Pichon, and from there trekked to Caraga town and sought help from their relatives.

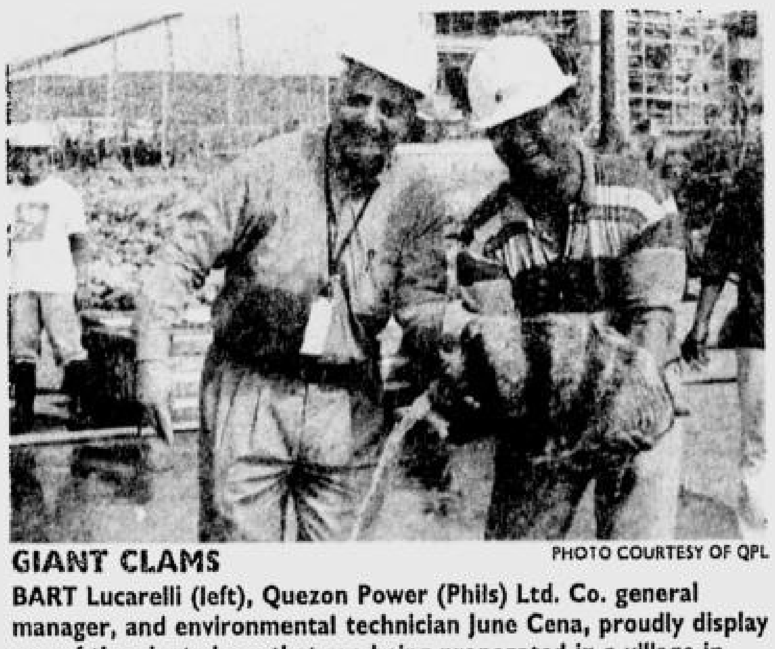
Their relatives accompanied them to Barangay Pichon and discovered the bodies of the Silat family. However, the bodies of the other victims were missing.

Matibay said they believed the bodies of Caloy Magno, Gerbin Banwing, Michael Galgo, Eddie Latiban and a certain Jandy were buried in another location.

Judge Diosdado Yamas ordered the suspects to appear in court for the preliminary hearing of the charges last May 20.

But Yamas did not order the arrest of the Mapando brothers.

A police source told the INQUIRER the Mapando brothers could now be in hiding. ***Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau***



GIANT CLAMS

PHOTO COURTESY OF QPL

BART Lucarelli (left), Quezon Power (Phils) Ltd. Co. general manager, and environmental technician June Cena, proudly display one of the giant clams that are being propagated in a village in Mauban, Quezon, under a project sponsored by the QPL.

OLONGAPO HOSTAGE DRAMA

Mayor saves 2 boys from crazed man

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY—Mayor Katherine Gordon saved two boys here from injury, or worse, death, after she convinced a suspected deranged man who took them hostage to release the boys and surrender to police on Sunday.

Police said the hostage-taker, Roderick de Castro, 27, seized and held Arsenio Gansin and a four-year-old boy identified only as Alex at the Olongapo City Assistance, Rehabilitation and Empowerment Center (Ocare) at 2 p.m. last Sunday.

The hostage-taking happened after De Castro escaped from the center's holding center. Ocare is a shelter managed by the city social welfare office for street children and vagrants.

De Castro was earlier arrested after he was seen holding a broken bottle and was reported threatening residents near the Marmont Hotel in Barangay Barretto. He was naked when arrested by policemen and taken to Ocare.

KATE GORDON

Police said Gordon went to the area when she heard reports that a hostage-taking incident was happening in the center.

De Castro, while detained at the Ocare, reportedly tried to hang himself with a shoestring but the center's personnel stopped him.

While in detention, De Castro started to become unruly and bang the grills of the door of his cell, police said. The door's padlock was destroyed and his cell was opened.

De Castro went out of his cell, picked up a piece of broken glass and held Gansin, one of the wards in the center.

He held Gansin's neck and threatened to stab him.

He was heard shouting: "*Walang papasok na pulis, kapag may pumasok na pulis, itatarak ko ito sa bata* (Do not allow policemen to enter or else I'll stab the boy)!"

Gordon initiated the surrender of De Castro who, after negotiations, gave in and freed Gansin.

But when De Castro noticed the presence of several policemen outside the center, he grabbed the other boy, Alex, and threatened to harm him.

De Castro held the throat of the boy and threatened to slit his neck if the policemen did not leave.

Police said Gordon again talked with De Castro and persuaded him to calm down. The suspect heeded the mayor's plea and freed Alex.

De Castro is now in police custody and was recommended for commitment to an institution for the mentally ill.

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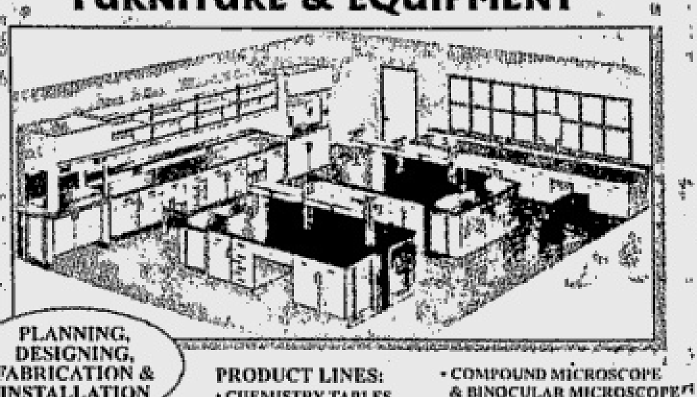

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Northern and Western Luzon.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	HI32° Lo 24°
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 22° Lo 16°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 25°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 23°
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 23°
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 22°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 25°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 25°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 26°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 27°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 26°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 25°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 26°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/05/23/02

ROUNDUP

Foreigner transferred

DAVAO CITY—The American treasure hunter injured in a blast inside a hotel here last week was transferred Sunday to a hospital in Manila, to the surprise of police authorities. Supt. Conrado Laza, the new city police chief, said they only learned about it after Michael Meiring was fetched by the SOS medical group and was ferried on a chartered plane. Meiring was supposed to be closely guarded by policemen at the Davao Doctor's Hospital but they kept their distance to give way to the request of the foreigner's friends. Laza said the police would file charges of illegal possession of explosives against Meiring. The management of the Evergreen Hotel is also set to file an estafa case against Meiring for his failure to pay his hotel bills amounting to P250,000. Laza said Meiring's transfer was not properly coordinated with the police. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Another mass grave

COTABATO CITY—Residents of a remote village in Matalam, Cotabato, found a mass grave with at least eight sets of skeletal remains on Monday. Radio station dxND in Kidapawan City reported that members of the Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND) found the mass grave in Sitio Natipakan in Barangay Lapaga, about 20 kilometers from Matalam town. FIND told dxND that they have been looking for their missing relatives the past 16 years after unconfirmed reports said the victims were summarily executed by communist rebels for refusing to cooperate with the guerrillas. Police and military authorities are still checking the findings of FIND and the Army's 6th Infantry Division has sent an investigative team. ***Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

P5.5M for roads

BAGUIO CITY—The Department of Public Works and Highways has allotted P5.5 million for the construction of roads here and in Benguet. Amante Wong, chief of the construction section of the DPWH's first engineering district in Benguet, said the amount would finance the construction of the Sto. Tomas-Tuba Road in Baguio City, Itogon-Dalupihan Road in Itogon, Benguet, a section of the Marcos Highway linking Tuba, Benguet, the La Trinidad-Alapang Road in La Trinidad, Benguet, and the Gurel-Bokod-Kabayan-Buguias Road. ***Jennifer Santos and Ayvi Alcain, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Cloud seeding in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—The city government and the Philippine Air Force on Saturday started cloud seeding operations here to induce rainfall in the city and nearby areas. Maj. Leo Aspan, head of the Philippine Air Force's weather group, said the cloud-seeding operations would last for 15 days and would cover parts of Ifugao where drought has affected farms and watersheds. The rainfall expected from the operations would last from 30 minutes to an hour. ***Ayvi Alcain and Jennifer Santos, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Park guard slain

BAGUIO CITY—A security guard manning the Burnham Park here was shot and killed allegedly by another guard on Sunday night, police said. The body of Constancio Laduan, 27, bore a bullet wound when found in an abandoned police precinct at the park. Another guard who was with Laduan was reported missing. ***Lezlee Santillan and Monette Bernabe, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Ms Magayon 2002

LEGAZPI CITY—The coronation of the Bb. Magayon 2002 will be held tomorrow night at the Albay Astrodome here. The beauty contest is one of the highlights of the month-long 4th Annual Magayon Festival of Albay. The pageant has for its theme "Enhancing beauty, femininity, love and respect and upholding Albay's dynamic and visionary outlook in promoting tourism." The beauty search is a project of the Federation of Albay Women's Organizations and the province's committee on tourism and cultural affairs. ***PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

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   ii) last date of employment
   iii) length of service
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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel ◎ Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

THE PITOGO wharf in Quezon: Where commercial fishing vessels and the outrigger boats of small fisherfolk are moored in peaceful coexistence. DELFIN T. MALLARI JR.

Quezon commercial fishers cry, too

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.

Pitogo, Quezon

BENEATH the seeming serenity of Pitogo, a coastal town of Quezon that lies in one of the coves of the Tayabas Bay, a piece of legislation is causing apprehension, especially among those who rely on a banned method of catching fish.

Administrative Order No. 17 of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DAO 17) disallows commercial fishing within 15 kilometers from the shoreline, in support of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. It also prohibits the use of active fishing gears and fine mesh nets within municipal waters.

Signed on June 13, 2001, DAO 17 provides the guidelines for the delineation of municipal waters in the country. The delineation was conceived to officially establish the territorial extent and limits of each local government unit.

However, the order's intent is still an alien concept in Tayabas Bay since it is being challenged in court by big-time commercial fishers. Its immediate and full implementation has now become the battle cry of organizations of small and poor fisherfolk.

If the order is implemented, fishing boat workers warn of dire consequences.

"Should commercial fishing operations finally stop, not only in the Tayabas Bay but also in other traditional fishing grounds, I don't know want kind of tomorrow awaits us. But one thing is certain—it is dark," lamented Dado Novis, skipper of a *pangulong*, a vessel engaged in purse seine fishing and banned from the 15-km limit.

Novis claimed that the commercial fish workers are similarly situated, "if not more miserable" than the small and poor fisherfolk.

"We don't even have a paddle and a boat of our own. And we're now on the brink of total displacement from our only means of livelihood. But nobody cries foul in our behalf," he said.

Hub

Located some 226 km south of Manila, Pitogo is the hub of commercial fishing operations in the Bondoc Peninsula. The Tayabas Bay has a total area of 287,332 hectares that spans at least 11 towns along the coasts of Batangas, Marinduque and Quezon.

Trawl, *buli-buli*, *pangulong*, *taksay* (small purse seine fishing vessel), and *kuto-kuto* are the types of commercial fishing boats that operate in the bay with a gross tonnage of up to 30 tons.

Eddie Mundin, a *taksay* worker, was more forthright about their fate: "Should the government really prevent us from fishing, the New People's Army would surely have a field day recruiting guerrillas. Or maybe some of us would join criminal syndicates for our family to survive."

Not all commercial fishing vessels are destructive, Mundin said. "Anyone who says that *pangulong* and *taksay* are destructive doesn't know what he or she is saying," he added.

The fish workers blamed the media and other advocacy groups for their unbalanced reporting on the state of the country's fishing industry.

"Writing for the interest of the so-called marginal and small fishermen could be one inspiring opportunity for any reporter. But they should not lump all members of the commercial fishing sector as villains," said Roberto Mendoza, a *bodegero* (warehouseman).

"Sometimes, we also sail back with empty catch when no school of fish passes by in our station," he said.

Pitogo has two fish ports and the leaders of the host barangays disclosed that 80 percent of their constituents depend on commercial fishing operations for their livelihood.

Demise

"You take away commercial fishing and you will be seeing the slow demise of my village," Teresita Marcellana, chair of Barangay Pamilihan, said.

Romeo Ocampo, chair of Barangay Dulongbayan, admitted that the government has no alternative livelihood in place in case the Tayabas Bay is totally closed to commercial fishing. "What will result is anarchy," he added.

Former Pitogo mayor Rafael Glinoga, a commercial fishing boat operator himself, described the town's economy as anchored on commercial fishing.

"You ban commercial fishing and this town will suffer severe hardship not yet known to any Pitogohin," he said.

He estimated that the town's total investments in commercial fishing could reach more than P100 million.

Pitogo has at least 15 *taksay* and *pangulong* vessels. Half of the population (around 21,000) "is directly or indirectly dependent on commercial fishing," according to Glinoga.

"What alternative would these displaced people turn to? Quezon has no more copra to save them. The farm is no longer the peaceful place it used to be because of the insurgency," he said.

Tita Capistrano, a fish broker at the Dalahican fish port in Lucena City, said thousands of people in the fish trading business would confront a similar situation and would likely end up jobless.

"From my employees down to the laborer who earns P10 per *banyera* and the ice trader, down to the last line of allied supplementary services, all of them would be facing hunger," she said.

"The country would face a critical shortage of fish if commercial fishing is totally banned. The small fishers could not fill in the void," she added.

Baseless

Rico Parale, head of a poor fisherfolk organization in the Tayabas Bay affiliated with the militant Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya sa Pilipinas dismissed the apprehension of the fish workers as baseless.

"They are just being used by the commercial fishing operators," he said.

Parale pointed out that because of the inherent defect in the implementation of the fishery law, "what happens is that we are being pitted against our fellow small fishermen who are in the employ of commercial fishing operators."

Asis Perez, chief lawyer of the Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog, a legal environmental defense center, criticized the nonimplementation of the law.

Most law enforcers seem hesitant to make arrests because they are technically handicapped, he said. "They could not even plot the exact location (where an arrest is to be made)," he said.

The technical information is crucial for the successful prosecution of persons caught violating the ban, he explained.

Boundaries

There are still no established territorial boundaries of the municipal waters in the Tayabas Bay as called for under DAO 17, Perez added.

Rodrigo Montilla, former chair of the Bigkis-Lakas-Pitogo chapter, another small fisherfolk organization, said he did not see anything destructive in the operations of some commercial fishing boats like the *pangulong* and *taksay*.

But he took exception to trawl and *buli-buli* fishing methods. "They are the ones that encroach on our traditional fishing grounds, which are near the shorelines. They also destroy the corals and other natural habitats of fish," he said.

The affected fishers' group "lost their case by default," Perez of the Tanggol Kalikasan said.

"What were well represented during the deliberations in Congress were the big-time commercial fishers and the small and marginalized fishermen. They have their own respective lobby groups. But this group of commercial fishers didn't have anybody to speak for them," he explained.

Noly Yu, another operator of the *taksay* and *pangulong*, raised the same sentiments. "That's what we are asking from the government and other concerned sectors. Hear our voice this time. Give us a chance to explain our side and for any unfair fishery law to be amended."

"We also share the concerns of the small fishermen. And we're more than willing to help them preserve their traditional fishing grounds," Yu said.

The affected fishers can be given concessions by the local government unit through an ordinance and in an agreement with the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council in the area, Perez said. They could operate in municipal waters from 10.1 km up to 15 km, he said.

The proposed local ordinance is only one of the "creative" approaches that the Tanggol Kalikasan would recommend during the three-day Tayabas Bay multi-stakeholder fishery summit to be held next month.

Atulayan: Powered by the people

By Jo Clemente

Contributor

A WINDMILL perched atop a rocky mound beckons one to this small island. What makes one stay awhile on the island are its people and their efforts to sustain their community by running their own power supply, building their own school, feeding their malnourished people and guarding their environment.

Atulayan is an island village off the coast of Nato in Sagnay town at the eastern part of Camarines Sur. It is one of the 19 barangays that comprise the fifth-class municipality found in a corner of the Pacific Ocean along the Gulf of Lagonoy.

To reach the place, one has to take a 20-minute boat ride from the Nato wharf, some 45 kilometers south of the provincial capital of Naga City.

Wind, sun power

As a prospective tourist destination, Atulayan boasts of white beaches and rich shell deposits, but this community's greatest attraction are its people.

The wind and the sun literally power the island barangay. The windmill is part of a Hybrid Power System that makes use of the wind and the sun to generate electricity.

Thus, despite the island's inaccessibility to a regular power source, all 140 households of Atulayan are illuminated at night and its people, mostly poor fisherfolk, have access to several amenities, like television and radio.

Antonio Buenaviste, the barangay chair for nine years, says Atulayan was the first community to have a Hybrid Power System in the country.

It has 48 storage batteries in its power room, capable of supplying all the power requirements of the barangay, even for an extended period.

The solar-wind turbine combo is backed by a diesel-fuelled generator to ensure continuous supply.

The project was donated four years ago and if the people of Atulayan didn't do their part as a community, the system would have gone to waste. The Barangay Atulayan Power Association manages the power system.

Buenaviste said the Camarines Sur Electric Cooperative (Casureco) helped the association in setting up the distribution lines and in providing training on how the hybrid system should be maintained, as well as how to read the meter.

Today, Atulayan's power association is independent of any electric cooperative. In the midst of the controversy over the purchased power adjustment (PPA), the islanders are not affected. They pay a minimum of only P40.65 for the first 10 kilowatt-hours they consume.

Member volunteers collect the payments, and the money, to be used for maintenance, is deposited in a bank.

If the management of the power system is an indication of how the Atulayan people value their resources, they know that their children and the environment deserve more.

Children

The children go to a multigrade class where four teachers handle Grades 1 to 6. Mila, the barangay chair's wife, said that several years back, all they had were Grades 1 and 2 classes. Persistence finally gave them what they wanted: a complete elementary school.

This year, the school graduated about 50 students. Not all, though, continued to high school because the closest high school to Atulayan is across the waters.

Those who pursued high school come home to the island only on weekends. They help sell the catch of the day so they can have school allowances for the coming week.

Atulayan is hardly visited by a doctor. But the people keep tab of their young and feed their undernourished children. The inaccessibility of basic services like hospital care has prompted them to develop their own system during emergencies. A boat is always on stand by for emergencies and a VHF radio patched to the town government's communications system is used to alert the town hospital for an ambulance.

Often, Mila says, the hospital's ambulance is already waiting at the Nato wharf by the time the patient gets there.

The same care is given to their environment. Buenaviste says his village is bent on preserving what it has. Recently, the barangay council passed a resolution requiring those caught throwing garbage, whether residents or visitors, to clean up the entire shore for a day as punishment.

A composting project has also been started and the residents are now taught how to segregate their garbage. PF

VISITORS inspect a power converter in the island village of Atulayan in Sagnay, Camarines Sur. JO CLEMENTE

House investigates backdoor negotiator

From page A1

the agreements, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Roy Cimatu made an emotional narrative: 85 of his men died and 250 were wounded in the three-month campaign in 2000 to capture 45 MILF camps.

"The camps we are talking about are the camps that we recovered," Cimatu said.

Cimatu said the soldiers sacrificed their lives to recover the camps, including Camp Abubakar, the main MILF base, which shattered the MILF's "myth of invincibility."

He talked of the happiness he and his men shared when they accomplished their mission, including raising the Philippine flag in the recovered camps.

Cimatu said that as a military commander, he disagreed with the provision on the rehabilitation of the MILF areas and the reparation for damages to rebel installations.

"I would have sought clarification on some of the issues because they were subject to varying interpretations," Reyes said.

Gonzales' MILF counterpart, speaking to a radio station in Cotabato City from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, said yesterday the agreement did not contemplate a turnover of the former rebel camps.

"Take it from me, the MILF will not retake its fallen camps but will work for the rehabilitation of conflict areas in Mindanao," MILF chief negotiator Al-haj Murad said, adding that the Malaysian agreements were a "humanitarian, rehabilitation and development accord."

Murad, who is also the MILF military chief, said that in his talks with Gonzales, "there was never a discussion about the retaking of 49 camps."

Tripoli Agreement

"There's nothing new about it, all the provisions of the agreement have already been agreed in the Tripoli Agreement of June 22, 2002," Murad explained. The Tripoli Agreement provides that both the government and the MILF will work together to rehabilitate areas affected by the "all-out war" of 2000 and to effect the return of displaced families.

"If the government, by act of Congress, will invalidate the accord, then that's their own lookout," Murad said. "What have been agreed by both sides, the MILF will stick to it and religiously abide by it."

Murad said the MILF negotiated in good faith and the participation of Malaysia, a member of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, was a guarantee that both sides would not violate the accord.

Reacting to congressional opposition to the interim agreements, Murad said: "I don't know. They are proclaiming peace and development yet they are opposed to an agreement that will formalize the attainment of peace and development."

Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF political affairs chief, said the opposition was using the Kuala Lumpur accord as ammunition in their attacks against Ms Macapagal.

"The brewing controversies are a by-product of politicians seeking to gain mileage at the expense of Ms Macapagal and her decent pursuit of the peace process."

Gonzales stressed that the agreements were interim and were meant as confidence-building measures for the forging of a final peace agreement.

"We have not signed a peace agreement. These agreements are intended for confidence-building," Gonzales said. He also denied that the agreements would allow the MILF to return to their camps.

Peace panel chief Jesus Dureza told the House hearing that Gonzales was appointed by the President to conduct back-channel negotiations after she suspended the peace talks on March 4, 2001.

Eduardo Ermita, presidential adviser on the peace process, explained that in a March 8, 2002 memorandum the President authorized Gonzales to sign interim agreements with the MILF to pave the way for a final peace agreement.

The President also appointed acting Press Secretary Silvestre Afable to assist Gonzales. Ermita said a final peace agreement could be signed with the MILF in six months.

Rebel camps

Oppositors to the documents said the communique implied recognition of former rebel camps as MILF territory while the guidelines included reparation for damages sustained by the MILF.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla and Pichay berated Gonzales when he admitted that he knew only "some" of the MILF camps recovered by the military.

Padilla and Pichay said they were "very much alarmed" at Gonzales' admission. "If Gonzales signed these agreements without knowing these areas, I am sorry for the government," Padilla said.

Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat said he had a list of the MILF camps recovered by the military including "Camp Osama bin Laden," which is listed as a "training camp" of the MILF in Buluan, Maguindanao.

Lobregat noted that based on their own admission during the hearing, Dureza, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, Cimatu, North Cotabato Gov. Manuel Piñol, other Mindanao officials and even Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr. were not consulted before Gonzales signed the documents.

Reyes said Gonzales was mandated to report to the Cabinet oversight committee through Ermita. "I am a member of the Cabinet oversight committee but I did not see the documents before these were signed," Reyes said.

Cimatu, who until last week was chief of the military's Southern Command, with responsibility for AFP operations in all of Mindanao, said he was aware of the backdoor negotiations but was not officially consulted.

Peace panel

Lobregat questioned the apparent sidelining of the all-Mindanao peace panel. "Does the President no longer have trust and confidence in negotiators she named, all of whom are from Mindanao?" he asked.

Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen asked if the designation of Gonzales superseded Executive Order No. 3, which created the peace panel. Pichay said the committee would determine whether Gonzales' authority was indeed valid.

Piñol, in the same hearing, said there were "gnashing of teeth and howls of protest" when the "hardworking Dureza" was sidelined by Gonzales whom he said represents "Imperial Manila."

In the same radio interview where Murad was a guest, Lobregat explained why he thought the agreement was disadvantageous to the government. "Why? There are now two armed forces in the Philippines," he said.

Lobregat also cited the provision on the reparation of MILF fighters and rehabilitation of areas affected by the conflict.

"This, in effect, has the meaning that we lost a war. Why will we pay?" he said. "It simply means that the government erred in taking over the MILF camps, that is why we are amending the wrong committed by the AFP?"

"What we have gained in the battlefield with the blood of our soldiers, we lost in the negotiating table due to inept, careless and reckless negotiators," Lobregat said.

Bongbong on witness: All talk

From page A1

requested for her identity to be kept secret as she feared for her life after testifying before the French National Assembly two years ago about the Russian Mafia's trafficking of body parts for transplant purposes.

Madame Z had claimed that at least $400 million in Marcos funds had been transferred from Credit Suisse to a subsidiary in Liechtenstein a day before the freeze order on all Marcos accounts was to take effect on March 24, 1986.

Marcos traced the information of alleged Marcos fund transfers and the high-level cover-up to Australian investigator Reiner Jacobi, whose lawyer, Dr. David Chaikin, had provided Malacañang with documents to support Madame Z's disclosures.

Jacobi had been hired by the Presidential Commission on Good Government to trace and recover the Marcos hidden accounts around the world. The PCGG later claimed that it had already dismissed Jacobi.

Con man

"This is all talk. They don't have the proof. It's the same letter from the same group. It's Jacobi again," Marcos said. He described Jacobi as a con man.

The governor had said in previous interviews that Jacobi approached the Marcos family in 1987 and tried to collect some $2 million in exchange for the release of Marcos funds in Switzerland.

"How many times have we talked about Jacobi? This Chaikin has been his lawyer for many years. So it's the same story they're trying to sell again (since 1986)," Marcos said.

He described Madame Z as someone who "dangles her supposed knowledge of the fund transfers so that the Philippine government coughs up money."

"If someone asks for money, it's always suspect. She has been asking a lot of money for lawyers' fee, or finders' fee. If she were to approach me, I would not pay her up. If you have something to say, say it," he said.

Lito Gorospe, Marcos' spokesperson, said in an earlier interview that the Marcoses were not discussing Madame Z's supposed disclosures.

"I have just been in Manila and I was with Mrs. (Imelda) Marcos. She has not mentioned a word about this," Gorospe said.

Gorospe said that it was by itself questionable that the witness calls herself Madame Z. But documents obtained by the INQUIRER showed that it was the French National Assembly report on the body parts trafficking which dubbed the witness Madame Z.

Asked whether the governor or any member of the family would testify once called by the Presidential Commission on Good Government, Gorospe said: "They (Marcoses) have always been willing. As you know, if the government calls them, they do go. Bongbong went to Sandiganyan several years back. But they haven't been called since."

₱5M of each solon's pork to be spent for El Niño

From page A1

The Speaker announced the creation of the House's "anti-El Niño fund" in the wake of the word war between congressmen and senators over Sen. Panfilo Lacson's proposal to abolish the pork barrel.

Pork barrel, money from the national budget that finances projects identified by legislators, has become a source of corruption for members of Congress, according to Lacson. He said that as much as 60 percent of the budget for an infrastructure project was lost to corruption.

Congressmen objected to Lacson's proposal, saying that they needed pork to bring projects to their constituents. They suggested that they use the pork barrel that senators wanted to give up.

Unanimous

De Venecia said all 218 House members "unanimously agreed" in a caucus yesterday afternoon with his proposal for each of them to give up P5 million in pork. The money will come from their share of the infrastructure budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) this year.

The Speaker said he proposed the fund after talking with farmers in Pangasinan, his home province, whose livelihoods were being threatened by El Niño. He said El Niño was also expected to affect farmlands in the Visayas and Mindanao.

House leaders will still discuss how to properly use the funds.

De Venecia said Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco was assigned to talk to House members from the Visayas. Rep. Robert Ace Barbers will talk to House members from Mindanao, and Representatives Jaime Lopez and Magtanggol Gunigundo II to legislators from Metro Manila and other urban districts.

Each representative of a congressional district is entitled to P65 million in Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) taken from various departments and to at least P35 million in infrastructure fund of the DPWH. A senator is entitled to P200 million in pork.

Not legislators

Whether it is scrapped or not, pork barrel should only be dispensed by national and local officials and not by legislators, a former military official said.

Retired Maj. Gen. Fortunato Abat, John Hay Poro Point Development Corp. chair, said legislators were voted, "not for a future slice of pork but to make law for their constituents."

"As lawmakers, they are expected to craft laws that executives implement for the good of the nation and for the well-being of the people," Abat said.

"If they want (members of Congress) to be involved in development efforts in their areas, they can do so by becoming active members in development councils from the barangay to the national level," he said.

Abat, defense secretary during the Ramos administration, said the infighting over the control of the P34.8-billion infrastructure budget of the DPWH for next year showed how low Philippine politics had deteriorated.

Legislators should not continue to nurture the notion that they need to have pork so that they could work, he said.

For legislators to discharge their functions properly, they should "actively participate in enacting good laws and be present during sessions," he said.

The use of pork has fueled the rivalry between two political families in Taguig, a town in Metro Manila.

Taguig Rep. Alan Cayetano and Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga are reportedly destroying each other's infrastructure projects. ***With reports from Armand N. Nocum and Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Agreements raise disturbing concerns

From page A1

chair Al-haj Murad served as witnesses.

On May 7, Gonzales and Musib Buat, chair of the MILF technical committee, signed the "Implementing Guidelines on the Humanitarian, Rehabilitation and Development Aspects of the GRP-MILF Tripoli Agreement on Peace of 2001 in Putrajaya. Secretary Ermita, Murad and ARMM Gov. Parouk Hussin signed as witnesses.

The first two provisions of the joint communiqué specified that:

1) The GRP and the MILF agree to isolate and interdict "all criminal elements and kidnap-for-ransom groups including so-called 'Lost Commands' operating in Mindanao" and:

2) Both sides agree "that the activities of these criminal groups impede the peace process, the effective pursuit of development programs and the efficient delivery of basic services to the poor" and "for this purpose immediate and joint action is needed for the security and upliftment of the affected communities."

The guidelines stipulated agreements on the respect for human rights and observance of international humanitarian laws and the implementation of rehabilitation projects and monitoring mechanisms.

But hardly had the ink dried when varied reactions ranging from the gnashing of teeth to howls of protests were heard from different groups—including, strangely enough, from members of the government's peace panel.

Whither Dureza?

The first point of controversy is the obvious absence of the signature and stamp of the panel and its chair, Presidential Assistant for Mindanao Jesus Dureza.

In 1999, Cotabato led other local governments in demanding the formation of an all-Mindanao peace panel to handle negotiations with the MILF. Eventually, President Macapagal-Arroyo responded by appointing Dureza and four other Mindanaoans to the panel. The panel was so well represented that even members of the tribal communities were involved in the technical working group.

But the panel faced a serious problem early on: not that the MILF leadership was difficult to talk with but that some senior administration officials had a different perspective on the negotiations. These officials were prone to "short-circuiting" the process by holding talks with the rebel group outside of the purview of the peace panel.

The first indication of this problem was the document Ermita signed in Kuala Lumpur shortly before the 2001 elections stating, among other things, that the Philippine government recognizes and honors "all previous agreements" signed before the outbreak of hostilities in 1999.

The implication was clear: Even those camps taken by government troops would be recognized and honored by the government, because those camps were recognized as rebel-held before the outbreak of the conflict. This had serious implications on the government's position that no rebel group was in control of any part of the country and that the MILF had no areas which could be considered its territory. In the complicated world of contending belligerent groups, the mere acknowledgement of a camp as rebel territory could mean ceding part of the country to a belligerent force.

To ordinary people in the conflict-affected areas, acknowledgement would mean the return of the armed groups to their former redoubts located in the midst of civilian-populated areas.

It took the President a lot of time to explain that it was not so. By the time the administration put out the fire, however, the senatorial elections were over and the administration candidates suffered a severe beating in the former conflict-affected areas.

'Back-channeling'

The two new agreements are no different from the controversial accord entered into by Ermita.

Prepared in time for the President's recent visit to Malaysia, the agreements were actually products of the "back-channeling" efforts of Gonzales and Ermita.

The documents literally had the fingerprints of Gonzales all over. Admired by many as a slick operator who gets things done, Gonzales was able to produce two signed documents that were obviously products of masterful backstage negotiations.

The signing could have been a splendid public relations coup, had it not been for some glaring inconsistencies. There were reports that Dureza was actually asked to sign the documents, but refused because the documents were not processed by the technical working group of the peace panel.

I had a chance meeting with Dureza on May 12 in Davao City. While he seriously tried to hide his disappointment by claiming that the documents signed by Gonzales were well-intentioned, he admitted that there were provisions in the agreements that were not processed by his group.

The second voice of disenchantment I heard came from no less than Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes. In a telephone conversation on May 14, he spelled out his own interpretation of the agreements and assured me that while he viewed the documents as well-intentioned, "something should be done to correct" some provisions.

On surface, the joint communiqué on the "isolation and interdiction of all criminal syndicates and kidnap-for-ransom groups" can be read as a sincere effort to address the charges that the MILF has been protecting gangs of kidnappers and giving refuge to Abu Sayyaf members fleeing from government troops in Basilan.

A closer look at the seven-point agreement, however, would bare finely crafted provisions which would mean that the government is acknowledging that the MILF has camps and that the armed forces or the police must secure clearance from the rebel group before it could enter what it tamely calls "MILF Areas/Communities."

Order of battle

Provision No. 3 of the joint communiqué says: "The AFP/PNP shall convey to the MILF an order of battle containing the names and identities of criminal elements as defined in the implementing guidelines on the security aspect of the GRP-MILF Agreement on Peace of 2001 suspected of hiding in MILF Areas/Communities."

The fifth provision states: "A quick coordination system will be established by the GRP-MILF ad hoc joint action group to enhance their communications and working relations for the successful apprehension or capture of criminal elements in accordance with this agreement provided that criminals operating outside the MILF Areas/Communities are considered beyond the purview of the peace process."

Provision No. 6 declares: "The MILF shall block the entry of criminals into MILF Areas/Communities. The MILF may request assistance of the AFP or PNP in the conduct of operations against such criminals inside MILF Areas/Communities."

What are the implications of these provisions?

By asking the government to direct the AFP or the PNP to first "convey to the MILF an order of battle," Provision No. 3 could also be interpreted to mean that no MILF member or commander suspected of involvement in criminal activities may be arrested unless the MILF hierarchy confirms their involvement in such actions.

Provision No. 5 declares that the arrest or capture of criminals operating inside the MILF Areas/Communities must be done with extreme caution as it is within the purview of the peace process.

But No. 6 is the trickiest. When reconstructed, it would simply mean that the MILF will try to prevent criminals involved in kidnapping and similar activities from entering its camps. Should these criminals succeed in seeking refuge in the camps, however, the AFP or PNP cannot pursue or arrest them unless the MILF agrees.

Over and above these, I believe what is causing Reyes a lot of discomfort is the fact that this agreement is actually a confirmation that the AFP and the PNP are ineffective in running after kidnappers and wanted criminals and that they need the MILF's help to accomplish this task.

Control of territory

Worse, the joint communiqué confirms what the MILF has been claiming all along: that they are still in control of territories within the Republic of the Philippines.

Without the tricky provisions and the implications, the first agreement, if observed sincerely and its positive intentions honored, could actually be the first step in forging trust and confidence between the MILF and the government.

Given the MILF's propensity in past negotiations to pull a fast one, however, it is more likely that the agreement would be marked by the implementation of the MILF's hidden agenda.

With the signing of this communiqué, the government has fallen into a trap set by the MILF. With a formal agreement that states that there are "MILF Areas/Communities," we can expect the rebel group to move for the identification of these so-called "Areas/Communities," not only for the joint effort against criminality but also for rehabilitation and development.

It is a cinch that in the list of identified MILF Areas/Communities that the rebel group would submit to the government for recognition would be very familiar names: Camp Abubakar, Camp Busrah, Camp Rajah Muda, Camp Usman and other previous MILF strongholds.

The MILF would then most likely move to ask the government to put up a perimeter defense, manned by MILF cadres, around the recognized Areas/Communities, to prevent the entry of criminal elements.

With that, the long process of returning to the MILF the very camps recovered by the government through the sacrifices of the country's brave soldiers will reach full circle.

(The author is on his second term as governor of Cotabato; he heads the Confederation of Mindanao Governors, City Mayors and League of Mayors Presidents.)

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SPORTS

Editor Al S. Mendoza ● Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

SPORTS ON TV
Compiled by Lorenzo Mangulat

BASKETBALL: NBA Anthology - Chicago Bulls 1996-97 Championship Season at 8:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN

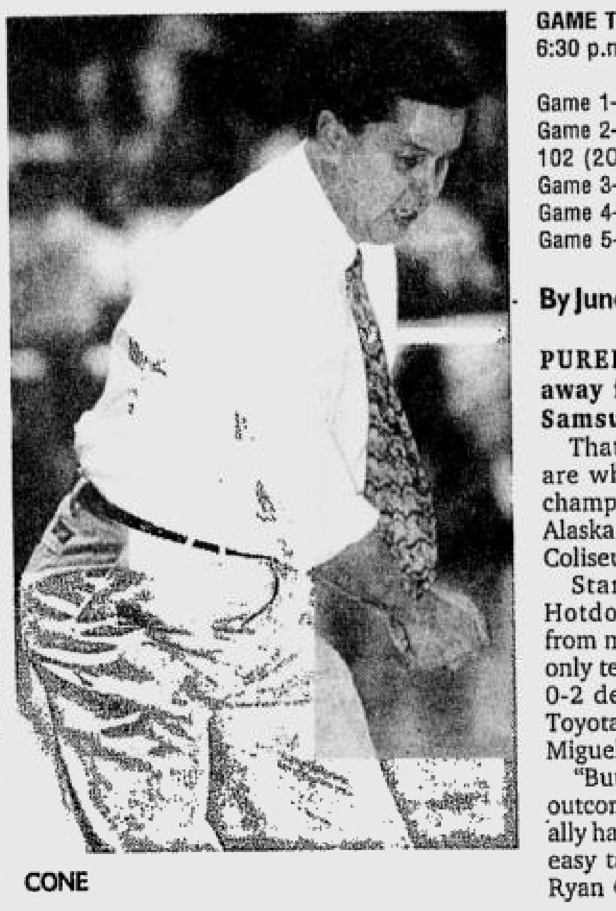
GOLF: PGA Mastercard Colonial, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r), Highlights at 7 p.m. on Star Sports

BASEBALL: Baseball Max at 2 p.m. (r) on ESPN

Wednesday Night Baseball at 3 p.m. on ESPN

PBA FINALS

Purefoods shoots for title tonight



CONE

GAME TODAY *(Araneta Coliseum)*
6:30 p.m.—Alaska vs Purefoods

Game 1—Alaska d. Purefoods, 79-73
Game 2—Alaska d. Purefoods, 106-102 (2OT)
Game 3—Purefoods d. Alaska, 80-66
Game 4—Purefoods d. Alaska, 82-76
Game 5—Purefoods d. Alaska, 84-72

By June Navarro

PUREFOODS is one game away from capturing the PBA Samsung Governors Cup.

That's how close the Hotdogs are when they try to end their championship series against the Alaska Aces tonight at the Araneta Coliseum.

Starting at 6:30 p.m., the Hotdogs are 40 minutes away from making a historic feat as the only team in 20 years to reverse a 0-2 deficit and win the crown. Toyota did it in 1982 against San Miguel Beer.

"But that's getting ahead of the outcome. We still have to work really hard against Alaska and it's no easy task," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio after the Hotdogs won Game 5, 84-72, for a 3-2 lead in the series.

Known for their resiliency in the face of adversity, the Aces are capable of coming back and steal the title away from the Hotdogs.

It's a sure thing to happen once Ron Riley, James Head and guys like Don Allado and John Arigo start putting their act together and concoct a formula on stopping Purefoods' Derrick Brown.

In Games 3 and 4, Riley was a non-factor as Roger Yap put the cuffs on him.

Riley showed up in Game 5, bringing his stuff near the shaded area to create a mismatch against his defenders but James Head lacked the complement the Aces needed.

Brown, adjudged as the best import of the conference, has been getting a lot of leverage from Kelvin Price, Kerby Raymundo, Rey Evangelista, Alvin Patrimonio, Ronnie Magsanoc and Yap.

Should they shine, the Hotdogs are bound to claim their sixth overall crown, a first since they defeated Gordon's Gin for the All-Filipino Cup title in 1997.

GREGORIO

Medvil booters prevail

KORONADAL CITY—Favored Medvil Football Club of Davao City overcame a slow start to whip surprise finalist Dipolog City, 5-0, and bag the "Double D" PGMA Sports for Peace Program All-Mindanao football title Tuesday at the sports complex here.

Held to a scoreless first half, coach Rafael Vilela's Medvil booters erupted with five goals in the last 45 minutes to turn the game into a rout.

Skipper Francisco Villano and Nelson Chavez knocked in two goals apiece, while Sonny Juanico Alonzo chipped in Medvil's fifth marker.

Iligan City nosed out Mindanao Friendship Games champion Misamis Oriental.

Medvil's Melehor Anzures was named most valuable player of the tourney organized by the PFF and supported by PGMA Sports for Peace Program and the Philippine Sports Commission.

Other individual awardees were Iligan's Heintze Ruiz, best defender; Jovanie Villagracia, best striker with 10 goals; and Dipolog's Wilfredo Lacaya, best goalkeeper.

B'vista second again

By M. A. Reyes

FOR the second time in four days, Eduardo Buenavista saw the gold medal slip through his hands when he again lost to Sivananda of India in the men's 5,000m run, finishing just a second behind Tuesday night in the second leg of the Asian Athletics Grand Prix in Bangkok.

Just like what he did in the first leg in Hyderabad, India, last week, the 4-foot-11 Buenavista matched the Indian every step of the way with his small but steady strides before faltering in the final 50 meters to settle for silver.

Sivananda, who bested the Filipino for the 3,000m gold in the first leg, clocked 14 minutes and 39.65 seconds, while Buenavista crossed the finish line 14:40.77.

Athletics chief Go Teng Kok, who has been monitoring the competitions through telephone while leading the preparation for the Manila leg dubbed as the PSC-PCSO Grand Prix this Sunday, said he expects no less than the gold medal for the Filipino in the third and final leg.

Kutitap tops ICTSI; Blu downs Shark

GAMES TOMORROW *(Makati Coliseum)*
3 p.m.—Kutitap vs Shark
5 p.m.—Blu vs Ateneo

By Dennis Eroa

KUTITAP choked ICTSI-La Salle with an unforgiving defense to hack out a 55-48 victory at the start of the PBL Chairman's Cup semifinals yesterday at the Makati Coliseum.

In the second game, Blu Sun Power tripped Shark Energy Drink, 73-67, keeping second place with an 8-4 record. Ateneo-Hapee-Negros Navigation is on top with an 8-3 card.

The Sparklers limited their rivals below 50 points for the first time this conference, unnerving the Green Archers with a deadly zone for most of the one-sided game.

ICTSI-La Salle, which fell to a tie with Kutitap with a 7-5 card, sorely missed for the second straight game the playmaking skills of pointguard Mike Cortez, who is still in the United States.

Without Cortez's all-around show, the Green Archers groped for form all throughout. Substitute playmakers Ronald Cuan and Chico Lanete got clobbered in the backcourt and the rest of the Green Archers failed to rise up to the occasion.

Fumbling like a bunch of school kids, the Green Archers trailed by 13 at the half, 37-24. They experienced a brief shining moment in the fourth quarter as Lanete made it, 41-45, but their hopes to salvage the game evaporated when Cyrus Baguio and Jorge Sison combined for a telling 7-0 blast which iced the game for Kutitap.

With a report from Emil Cabrera

Scores:

KUTITAP 55—Salangsang 14, Baguio 10, Jones 8, Saquilayan 6, Sison 6, Mallari 4, Gelig 4, Dy 3, Natividad 0, Mercado 0, Catli 0.

ICTSI-LA SALLE 48—Yap 15, Wilson 10, Lanete 6, Franco 4, Ramos 4, Magsumbol 3, Omolon 2, Cuan 2, Zamora 2, Daep 0.

Quarters: 18-18, 37-24, 45-37, 55-48.

BLU 73–Dimaunahan 17, Latoreno 11, Machica 10, Calo 9, Legaspi 9, Gatumbato 8, Gottenbos 6, de la Cuesta 2, Mendez 1, Roldan 0, Codamon 0.

SHARK 67–Castro 17, Bravo 12, Ybañez 11, Junio 8, Cole 6, Basilides 5, Ortega 4, Caceres 2, Sotto 2, Vergara 0, Ayodelle 0.

Quarters: 16-20, 33-35, 55-44, 73-67.

A word from a stranger

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I RARELY entertain complete strangers. But this one's different.

Read on:

"Dear Sir,

"We are a basketball crazy nation and basketball is a tall man's game.

"In the Busan Asiad in September, China has the strongest and tallest team. China at present has three tall players, Batere Menk (6'11), Wang Zhi Zhi (7 ft) and Yao Ming (7'5). I don't understand why Coach Jong Uichico did not pick 7'1 EJ Feihl, our only 7 footer. Feihl is a bit slow and in the PBA, smaller players run rings around him. But in the last Asian Games he performed spectacularly against the tall players of China.

"If Uichico could review the tapes of the last Asian Games, he will see that Feihl was able to check and limit the points of China's two centers. Menk scored only 5 points and Zhi Zhi 7. Feihl scored 6 points and grabbed many rebounds. Zhi Zhi is the most valuable player in the Chinese Basketball Association and during their last championship game, he scored 40 points.

"In our game against China, China's smaller players were the ones who beat us, although we only lost by 12 points. All the other teams were routed by China.

"In our first game against Kazakhstan, the Kazakhs were so intimidated by Feihl that whenever he was playing, they never drove for the goal. We beat the Kazakhs handily.

"In our second game against the Kazakhs for third, Coach Tim Cone used a small team and Feihl was not used. The Kazakhs made a lot of points under the goal and nearly beat us.

"In our games against Korea, Cone again played a small team against the Koreans and we were blown away. Feihl was never used. The 6'10 Korean center 6'10 made mincemeat of the smaller Marlou Aquino and Andy Siegel. He would have had a tough time scoring under the goal if Feihl was around since Feihl is taller and has very long arms.

"Apparently since we are used to small players, we don't understand the intimidating factor of a seven foot player.

"Marlou Aquino should also be included in our team but the problem with Aquino is his lack of patriotism.

"During an interview, Aquino said he did not want to play for the country because he might get injured and lose his livelihood. Then he picked up a fight with Uichico during the start of the tryouts, ensuring his ouster from the team.

"Aquino even plays lackadaisically in the PBA. He is just content with plodding along and collecting his salary; none of the teams he has played in has won the PBA Championship possibly because of his attitude.

"Our biggest player in the next Asian Games is Asi Taulava but he is much smaller than the three centers of China.

"We need Feihl to plug the center. We also need fast big guards and forwards who can stop the fastbreaks of the forwards and guards of China who stand 6'5 or 6'7.

"I urge Uichico to review the tapes of the last Asian Games and also the tapes of the Jones Cup prior to see how effective Feihl is in international competitions. Unless we have a tall team, we will be lucky to end up 6th in Busan.

"Yours truly,
(Sgd.) Rico Xeres
Eisenhower St. Greenhills, SJ"

■

CALLING KUYA RAFFY. The remains of your mother, Tia Celing (Celedonia Sison Ramos), will be interred on Saturday, May 25, at 10 a.m. at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque. Your sister, Atchie Melba, was set to arrive last night from Los Angeles. According to your brothers Rudy and Mike, your name was in the lips of Tia Celing before she died on May 20.

Celtics tie series with Nets at 1-all

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey — The Boston Celtics stopped the Nets from running and made a defensive stand while taking control in the third quarter Tuesday to defeat New Jersey 93-86 and even the Eastern Conference finals at one game each.

Boston's Antoine Walker scored 26 points but wore out his right elbow doing so, taking 32 shots and making 11 - just two of them 3-pointers. Paul Pierce added 18 points but also had major issues with his accuracy, going only 3-for-20 from the field and 11-for-20 from the line.

"When you play defense at the level we did tonight, you can afford to go 14-for-52," Walker said.

The rest of the Celtics combined to shoot 18-for-41, with Kenny Anderson, Eric Williams and Tony Delk each reaching double figures.

But despite their difficulty getting the ball to go in, the Celtics made life on offense even tougher for the Nets.

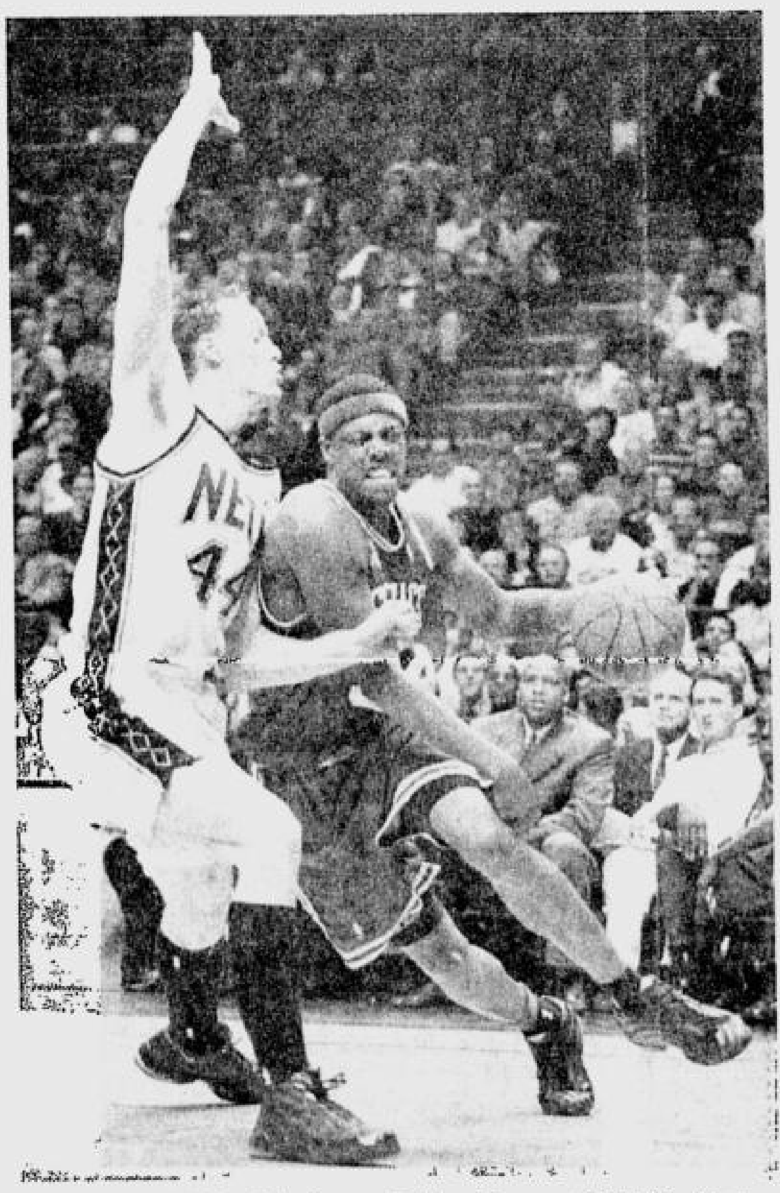
The key stretch took up most of the third as the Nets went 16 consecutive possessions without making a field goal.

Boston had an 18-1 run to turn a one-point lead into a 16-point edge, while New Jersey didn't get closer than five points until the final 20 seconds.

Pierce made his final four free throws as Boston hung on despite going the final 3:40 without a field goal.

Game 3 will not be played until Saturday (Sunday in Manila), giving both teams plenty of time to consider how different Game 2 was from Game 1. Much like the Nets were two nights earlier, the Celtics were the aggressors in this game when it came to running, hitting the boards and playing with passion.

"They picked the pressure up a lot. We didn't attack. We were on our heels the whole game," Kenyon Martin said. "They just played harder than we did." ***AP***



PAUL Pierce (right) of the Boston Celtics drives past Keith Van Horn of the New Jersey Nets during Game 2 of their NBA Eastern Conference finals yesterday in East Rutherford, NJ. The Celtics won, 93-86. AFP

Yao gets Rockets attention

HOUSTON—The Houston Rockets are looking at their options with the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft and they all seem to be pointing to 2.26-meter (7-foot-5) center Yao Ming of China.

General manager Carroll Dawson carefully pointed out Tuesday that with plenty of other elite players to consider, the Rockets have much homework to do before the June 26 draft.

Still, the intriguing possibility of the Rockets selecting a center with superstar potential - as they did with Hakeem Olajuwon in 1984 - has everyone excited.

"On the street, I have a hard time going anywhere," Dawson said. "It brings a lot of talk and that has to be considered. Believe me, it will be."

That doesn't mean he's complaining.

"The first pick has a great feel to it, and being on the inside is very exciting," Dawson added. "We are still on a big high."

The Rockets expect to listen to all offers but Dawson thinks it will be difficult to part with the first pick.

Forest Hills Invitational unfolds today

A BRAND-NEW Toyota Corolla, a Club Car golf cart, and a set of TaylorMade golf clubs are up for grabs as Forest Hills Golf Club launches its first member-guest tournament, The Forest Hills Invitational, today at the challenging par-71 jack Nicklaus-designed golf course in Antipolo City.

Forest Hills Chair lawyer Ferdinand Santos leads the traditional hitting of the ceremonial ball together with Rizal Gov. Nini Ynares, Representatives Jack Duavit and Vic Sumulong, Antipolo City Mayor Angelito Gatlabayan, Fil-Estate Corp., Chair Robert Sobrepeña, Golforce Inc. president Roberto Escaño, and TaylorMade-Adidas sales and marketing manager Ernest Paguia.

Golforce Inc. and TaylorMade-adidas is co-presenting this event together with major backers MRT Dev. Co., AST Security Corp., Joey@92.3, Pisanti and Turf Company. The Toyota Corolla is courtesy of Toyota Motors Philippines.

Other sponsors of the tournament are former Rep. Gilberto Duavit, CAP Group of Companies, Foodlink Inc., Fortune Tobacco, Gerry's Grill, Global Brands, Haagen Dazs, Lipovitan, Primepower Manpower Services, and Swatch Seasider.

"For our initial member-guest venture, we are very fortunate to have gotten the generous support of all the sponsors coupled with the enthusiasm of our members," said tournament director Victor de Guzman.

The tournament is a four-day affair with each team playing for two days using the Stableford Scoring System. All the teams will play best ball on the first day and then will use the aggregate on the second day of play.

Handicapping of the participants will be based on the following guidelines: Forest Hills members shall use their April 2002 Handicap Index while their guests must use their lowest April 2002 Handicap Index in any club which they are members of.

A party has been set for the participants on the last day. Entertainers Subas Herrero and Noel Trinidad are the emcees of the awarding ceremony while the Moonstrucks Band, noted for its rendition of sounds from the '60s and '70s, is the guest performer.

SPORTSWATCH

Gloria, hubby join Wack Wack meet

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo have confirmed their participation in the First Asian Parliamentarians Golf Cup on June 8-9 at Wack Wack. To be hosted by the House of Representatives, the Golf Cup, which is aimed at reinforcing linkages and deepening collaboration within the Asian region, is expected to draw legislators, top government officials and diplomats from neighboring Asian countries. "The Golf Cup was envisioned by the President (Arroyo) as a viable tool in providing accurate perceptions about the Philippines and its capabilities, which can significantly advance the country's political, trade, security, and other interests," said Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella, chair of the House Committee on Youth and Sports. The First Asian Parliamentarians Golf Cup is backed by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Heritage Hotel, National Golf Association of the Philippines, DHL, and Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Spearheading the event are the Philippine Sports Commission, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Tourism with the Philippine Tourism Authority, Department of Foreign Affairs, Metro Manila Development Authority, Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police.

MBA's Loyzaga tests golfing scribes

MEDIA golfers pit their skills against Metropolitan Basketball Association (MBA) golfing executives as the May edition of the Maddogan's monthly tournament fires off today at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Ternate, Cavite. The MBA, which is co-sponsoring the event with Rudy Project (maker of fashionable sports eyewear), will be bannered by Commissioner Chito Loyzaga and Silverstar Communication's Louie Kierulf. Others expected to play include Ding Marcelo and Dodo Catacutan of Manila Bulletin; Al Mendoza and Jong Arcano of INQUIRER; Lito Tacujan, Abac Cordero and Nelson Beltran of Philippine Star; Rey Bancod of Tempo; Philip Evardone and Manny Angeles of Manila Times; and, Edwin Gabutina of Today. The business editors will be led by Bing Jaleco. The National Golf Association of the Philippines, which helped organize the event along with the MBA and Rudy Project, will be represented by Jake Ayson and businessman-sportsman Benny Gopez.

Hilado Memorial Cup June 1-7

THE NEGROS Occidental Tennis Association headed by Dr. Severo Lacson will host the Luis Hilado Memorial Cup on June 1-7 in Bacolod City. Players may now register with Loida Mallare and Cesar San Juan at the Philta office (tel. nos. 525-6434 and 523-6415). Deadline of entry is on May 31 at 12 noon. Entry fee are P300 for singles and doubles, P300 for singles only and P400 for doubles only. National coach Johnny Jose is the tournament director while Gabriel Cainap and Adelino Gasing Jr. are the chair umpires. Johnny Arcilla, fresh from winning the singles and doubles titles in the Mandaue Open last week, and Coca-Cola Open single champion Joseph Victorino are seeing action in the Group D event offering a total purse of P100,000.

Paragua itching to meet Gomez anew

PARAGUA

INTERNATIONAL Master Mark Paragua gets a chance to exact revenge on National Master John Paul Gomez when the country's top two juniors battle anew in the Philippine Youth age-group chess championships starting May 25 at 10 a.m. at the 2/F Centermall, Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan. Paragua, who finished runner-up behind Gomez last year, has signed up for the under-20. Since he got beaten by Gomez, Paragua has had a string of successes here and abroad, capped by his brilliant performance in the last National Chess Championship where he finished tied for second place that earned him a coveted spot in the RP Olympic team.

Shell's Jao rules Superbike series

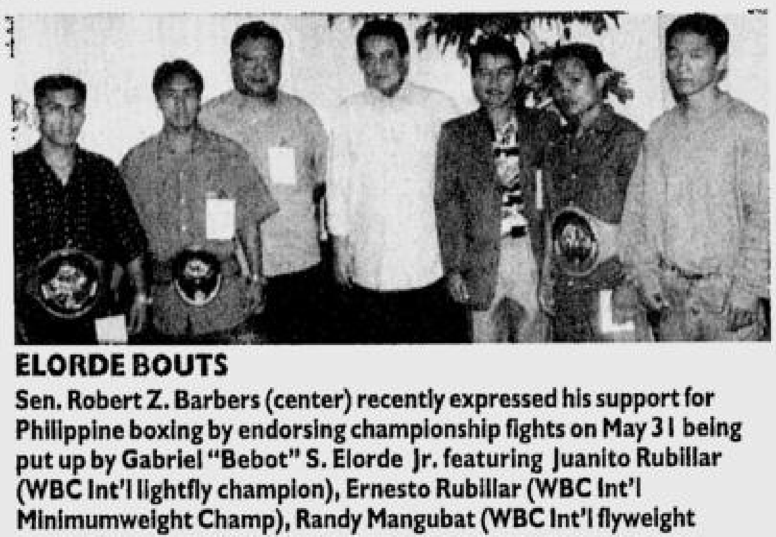
ROSARIO, Batangas—Defending champion Joiet Jao of Shell-YRS Racing Team proved on Sunday that it only takes sheer skills and experience to win a race. Despite using his old Yamaha R6 against the high-powered machines of his rivals, Jao was simply unstoppable in sweeping the Expert class of the Shell Advance Superbike series anew in the 2002 Casino Filipino Grand Prix at the Batangas Racing Circuit here. The victory fortified his campaign for a "three-peat" in this series sponsored by the Batangas Racing Circuit Association (BRCA) Board of Governors, Casino Filipino, Pilipinas Shell, Toyota Motors Phil., MOF Shipping, Norkis-Yamaha, Marlboro, Kilton Motors Corp. and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office through General Manager Ver Angelo.

Potenciano keeps hopes alive

TEAM Meritus Indonesian driver Mackel Ali cruised to comfortable wins in Rounds 3 and 4 of the Asian Formula 2000 Championship at the Johor Circuit in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, on Sunday. Ali took the overall lead while lone Filipino entry Mike Potenciano grabbed fourth in both races to keep his second place standing after four rounds. Potenciano's efforts to put the Philippines on top are supported by the world's largest mobile service provider-zed, lubricants Gulf Oil, youth and sporty clothing apparel maker Dickies, BLTBCo and MP Turbo.

Pasay derby gets going tomorrow

A BIG crown is anticipated at Pasay City Cockpit when the special 4-cock derby promotion of Ococ Manuel Sy and TJ Tanlalco Jr. gets underway tomorrow, Friday. Pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano said the derby will start at 7 p.m. At stake is a cash prize of P300,000 while entry fee is P10,000. Last week, two entries emerged champions in the PCC 4-cock derby. These are RCJ Cut-Cut of Rudy Jose and Happy Birthday Summer Set of Renato Shio. Meanwhile, another 4-cock event is slated on May 31, with lawyer Onofre Abella and Buchoy Olano as hosts. The Pasay Cockpit 15th Anniversary 5-Cock Derby is set on July 18 and 20. For other inquiries, call 816-6750, 843-1746 and 843-1890.



ELORDE BOUTS

Sen. Robert Z. Barbers (center) recently expressed his support for Philippine boxing by endorsing championship fights on May 31 being put up by Gabriel "Bebot" S. Elorde Jr. featuring Juanito Rubillar (WBC Int'l lightfly champion), Ernesto Rubillar (WBC Int'l Minimumweight Champ), Randy Mangubat (WBC Int'l flyweight champ) and Archiel Villamor.

RACING TIPS

At San Lazaro By Mr. 999

Race 1—1. Golden Brook 2. Jhelen 3. Alert One 4. Walang Hanggan
Race 2—2. Snake Dancer 2. Beatitudes 3. Classy Babe
Race 3—1. Thundering Dunk 2. Jellbeanjoy 3. Join the Saints
Race 4—1. Tiger Eye 2. Dinner Dress 3. Exceptional Charm
Race 5—1. Ready Aim Fire 2. Premiere Event 3. Show Money 4. Silent Heat
Race 6—1. Velocity 2. Terrific 3. Tumataginting 4. Dampi 5. Gifted Galloper
Race 7—1. Andee's Joy 2. Wrecking Ball 3. Court General 4. Ladies' Night 5. Power Corrupts
Race 8—1. Ikaw 2. Fortune Maker/Party Princess 3. Night Flight 4. Winning Prize 5. Standout
Race 9—1. Mother Earth 2. Take Chances 3. Never Quit 4. Gossip Column 5. Imperial Act 6. Pretty Pleasing

Que, Delariarte hurdle opening rivals at E. Ridge

By Jong Arcano

GEN. TRIAS, Cavite—It was a breeze for elimination topnotcher Jerome Delariarte while history-seeking Angelo Que struggled a bit before winning yesterday in their opening matches in the 2002 Philippine amateur golf championship yesterday at the Faldo course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club here.

The 23-year-old Delariarte was simply ruthless against Southwoods stablemate Raymund Sangil, not yielding a single hole to chalk up the quickest victory of the day—a 9 and 7 triumph that gave him the luxury of having an early lunch.

Que was pushed to the limit by Vicente Tuason before pounding out a 3 and 2 win to set up a second round meeting with the dangerous Jun Bernis, a 4&3 winner over jungolfer Lyndon Barril.

The day, however, belonged to longshot Kheed Nielsen Ng, a Fil-Chinese making his first appearance here. He ousted third seed and ex-pro Dave Hernandez with a par-birdie finish for a shocking 1-and- up victory.

Ng tries to stretch his luck farther against Southeast Asian Games champ Juvic Pagunsan, who hacked out a 6&4 victory over Bobby Celestino.

"I'm a little nervous about my match with Juvic but I just hope to be able to give him a good fight," said Ng.

JR Tanpinco likewise scored a big reversal when he birdied the first hole of a sudden-death playoff with Juami Rocha in the tourney sponsored by DHL Philippines and Wide Wide World Express with the support of Mitsubishi Motors and the Philippine Sports Commission.

AP

BEATEN AGAIN

Russia's Anna Kournikova reacts after losing a point to Hungary's Petra Mandula on the second day of the women's Strasbourg tennis tournament yesterday. Mandula won, 7-6, 6-2.

Arcilla brods Toby's winners

ARCILLA brothers Jomar and Joseph of Letran College registered similar wins yesterday to gain second-round berths in the boys' 21-under second-round division of the Toby's-Philta Age Group Tennis Challenge at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Jomar breezed past John Rey Moreno, 6-1, 6-2, while Joseph outclassed Eduardo Ignacio, 6-1, 6-2.

Other winners were James Soldevillo over Jocel Casim, 6-0, 6-0; Michael Tenoria over Ariel Sullano, 6-0, 6-0; and Johan Guba over Jim Jimenea, 6-3, 6-2. Jason Astano and Gino Bautista won by default.

In the boys' 14-under class, top seed Raymond Villarete of La Salle-Greenhills stamped his class over Kaeser Verso, 6-0, 6-0; Josua Tan Ho of Xavier clobbered Roy Lito Villafuerte, 6-0, 6-1; and Randy Delavin defeated Francis Onate, 6-4, 6-1, to reach the second round.

Borja, Retuya share Toyota Cup honors

ROSARIO, Batangas—Shell Racing Team's Mandy Borja and Joey Retuya shared Formula Toyota Cup honors after winning separate races recently in the 2002 Casino Filipino Grand Prix at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

Borja got the lucky breaks in the last five laps to rule Round 3 while Retuya, a Cebuano native came up with decisive car adjustments to clinch his second win in Round 4 of this event sanctioned by the Automotive Association of the Philippines (formerly PMA) and sponsored by the Batangas Racing Circuit Association (BRCA) Board of Governors, Pilipinas Shell, Toyota Motors Phil., MOF Shipping, Norkis-Yamaha, Marlboro, Casino Filipino, Kilton Motors Corp. and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office through General Manager Ver Angelo.

For a while, it was guest driver Edgen Dy-Liacco who dominated the race after Retuya spun out on the Casino Filipino bend on the second lap.

But Dy-Liacco's engine blew up on the 10th lap as Borja took the opportunity to seize the pole and hold on to it till the finish. Retuya tried to catch up as he sped with a fastest laptime of 1:36.271 on the 11th but Borja was just way ahead of the pack.

Borja clocked 34.59.570, or 6.6 seconds ahead of Retuya, who lost valuable time after hitting the gravel thrice while Round 1 winner Carlo Pastor of Team TEC-Shell Racing checked in third with 1:41.554.

MP Turbo lines up clinics May 25-26

THE SUBIC Lemans Go Kart Track in the SBMA Freeport will teem with activity when the 2002 MP Turbo Speedfest Kart Series is held on May 25-26.

MP Turbo has lined up several activities for both new and experienced drivers. Akart clinic will kick off the festivities on Saturday morning.

The clinic is designed for drivers, young and old alike. It will be conducted and supervised by Mike Potenciano, Carlos Anton and George Apacible, multititled drivers of the MP Turbo Racing Team.

Certificates of completion will be awarded to all the participants at the end of the clinic.

On Saturday evening, MP Turbo will run a three-hour karting enduro. An enduro is an endurance race wherein the participating drivers in a team alternate behind the wheel of a vehicle in trying to negotiate as many laps as possible over a set period of time. For other details, call MP Turbo at 832-5217 or email at mpturbo@pacific.net.ph or visit our website www.mpturbo.ph

Teopaco, Salud, Danding challenge top cockers

CEBU and Bacolod cockers will test the mettle of their counterparts from Metro Manila when the awaited "Flyover 5-Cock Derby" gets going today at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout shampoo of Lakpue Drug Inc.

Invited by derby host Bobby Wong are Arnold Mendoza, Chito Tinsay, Butch Halili and Muroy Dolorico from Bacolod and William Ang from Cebu.

To challenge them are OPMI president Vic Yu, *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, Ucap president Butch Macasaet, Blandy Tolentino, Boy de Roca, Esting Teopaco, Biboy Enriquez, Mayor Eddie Alarilla, engineer Jun Sevilla, lawyer Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza, Mayor Jessie Viceo, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Louie Cua, Ram Lopez, and Raymond Velayo.

Last Tuesday, three cockers ruled the Ucap Special 5-Cock derby after posting five points each. They were Antonio (Hammer Sagupaan), De Roca (BL Jojit 128) and Pol Estrellado (PE San Pablo Hammer).

Meanwhile, the 3rd Conference LGBA 7-Cock Championship Derby is all set at Mandaluyong Coliseum next week, May 28 and 30.

The much-awaited Mandaluyong 9-Cock International derby second leg explodes on June 4, 6 and 8 to be hosted by OPMI president Vic Yu and Ramon Mansenares.

For inquiries, please contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

Sulaiman: Andrade is dangerous

WORLD Boxing Council president Jose Sulaiman has cautioned WBC international flyweight champion Gerry Peñalosa and his manager Rudy Salud of his Mexican opponent Oscar Andrade, whom the WBC chief described as a "tough fighter."

Sulaiman said Peñalosa should better be ready for Andrade whom the Filipino former champ will face on May 24 (May 25 in Manila) at the Feather Falls Casino in Sacramento, California.

Peñalosa was ordered to fight Andrade before he gained the right to challenge Masamori Tokuyama again on Nov. 8. The Japan-born, North Korean successfully defended his crown against the Filipino last September.

Peñalosa is working out under the supervision of trainer Freddie Roach, who is also handling International Boxing Federation super bantamweight champion Manny Pacquiao at his Wild Card gym near Hollywood.

Roach has put Peñalosa under rigid training, making him spar with a roster of hard-hitting Mexicans including Carlos Madrigal, who has an 18-win, 1-loss record before suffering a stunning loss to Andrade.

Andrada has just defended his North American Boxing Federation title with a second-round knockout win over Jorge Luis Gonzales last April 24. The 27-year-old Andrada has a ring record of 29 wins (17 by KO, 21 defeats and one draw, while the Filipino has a mark of 44-4-2 with 30 Kos.

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On Target: Uniformed cops drinking: ugly sight /A22

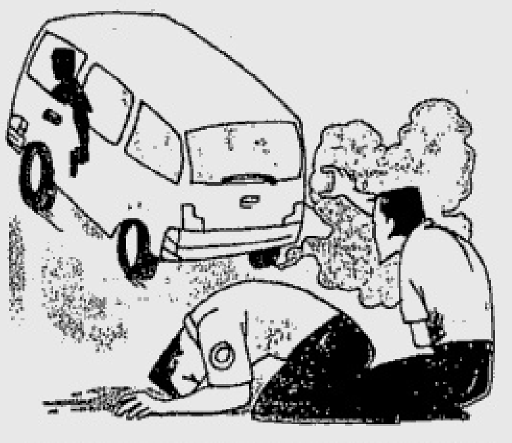
METRO

Editor Louie C. Camino

Jude Estrada charged in Naia swindle case /A22

Trader kills guard in tollgate rage

By Christian V. Esguerra



AN IRATE businessman on Tuesday allegedly killed a North Luzon Expressway enforcer and shot another after the victims flagged him down for a traffic violation at the tollway exit in Sta. Ines, Pampanga.

Suspect Nady Besario, owner of a Japan surplus company, shot dead Generoso Quiazon and wounded Jaime Espinosa when the highway enforcers tried to confiscate his vehicle's license plates at 9:55 p.m., according to a report from the Philippine National Construction Corp.

Quiazon died before he reached the Angeles University Foundation Medical Center, according to the report.

Espinosa, head of the PNCC security unit, is now confined in the same hospital for a gunshot wound in the abdomen.

Quiazon flagged down Besario's white Mitsubishi Canter van (UUN-608) Tuesday night for having no plate light, the PNCC report showed.

When Espinosa asked for the suspect's driver's license, Besario reportedly refused, prompting the enforcer to seize the license plates of the suspect's vehicle.

Just as Quiazon was about to get the plates, an enraged Besario pulled out a gun and fired on Quiazon and Espinosa, investigation showed.

Besario fled and later abandoned his vehicle at Kilometer 87 of the North Luzon Tollway.

There were traces of blood in the vehicle as well as empty 9mm shells. PNCC enforcers also found the vehicle's registration papers, which was in the name of Pablo A. Mahor Presentacion of Quezon City.

Members of the Mabalacat police took into custody Besario's helper Celso Anora, who identified his employer as the gunman.

Police said Anora was with Besario during the shooting incident.

DENNIS SABANGAN

MONSTROUS TASK
Authorities try everything to put an end to the manufacture and sale of fake VCDs and DVDs all over the metropolis. But, just like this demonstration at the Quezon City Hall yesterday, it's doubtful if the drive would achieve total success against monstrous video pirates. (See *story on A22*).

St. Paul's coed refuses 'test' inside a motel

By Philip Tubeza

THE PROFESSOR allegedly "brought" the young complainant to the Anito Lodge in Manila in exchange for a passing grade.

This surfaced yesterday after a 17-year-old college freshman at St. Paul's Manila accused her philosophy professor of trying to rape her last week.

The complainant, a resident of Las Piñas, had failed her philosophy subject under the suspect.

She had wanted to take a special examination.

But after suggesting that she take an "oral exam," the suspect allegedly brought the complainant to the motel against her will.

In a sworn statement, the girl said the incident happened around 9 a.m. on May 13 at the Anito lodge at the corner of Mother Ignacia and Quirino Avenue in Manila.

Two days before, the complainant talked to her professor and asked for a "special" exam or project.

He allegedly suggested an oral exam but she insisted that she take a written exam at the school library.

But the suspect told her he was busy. When she insisted, he told her to meet him near St. Paul's College at around 7 a.m. on May 13 if she did not want to shift.

The complainant said she agreed and boarded the suspect's gray Lancer at Malvar Street near the school that morning.

The professor allegedly even ordered her to put on sunglasses so passing students would not recognize her.

They drove to Guerrero, then to Nakpil street.

The girl said she broke down and cried in trying to convince her professor to let her take the exam.

She said she even wrote a note to him saying "Sir, *maawa na kayo* (Sir, have mercy)."

After that, the suspect allegedly began asking her "personal questions."

He allegedly told her that a passing grade would mean "a favor" from her.

ST. PAUL'S/ A22

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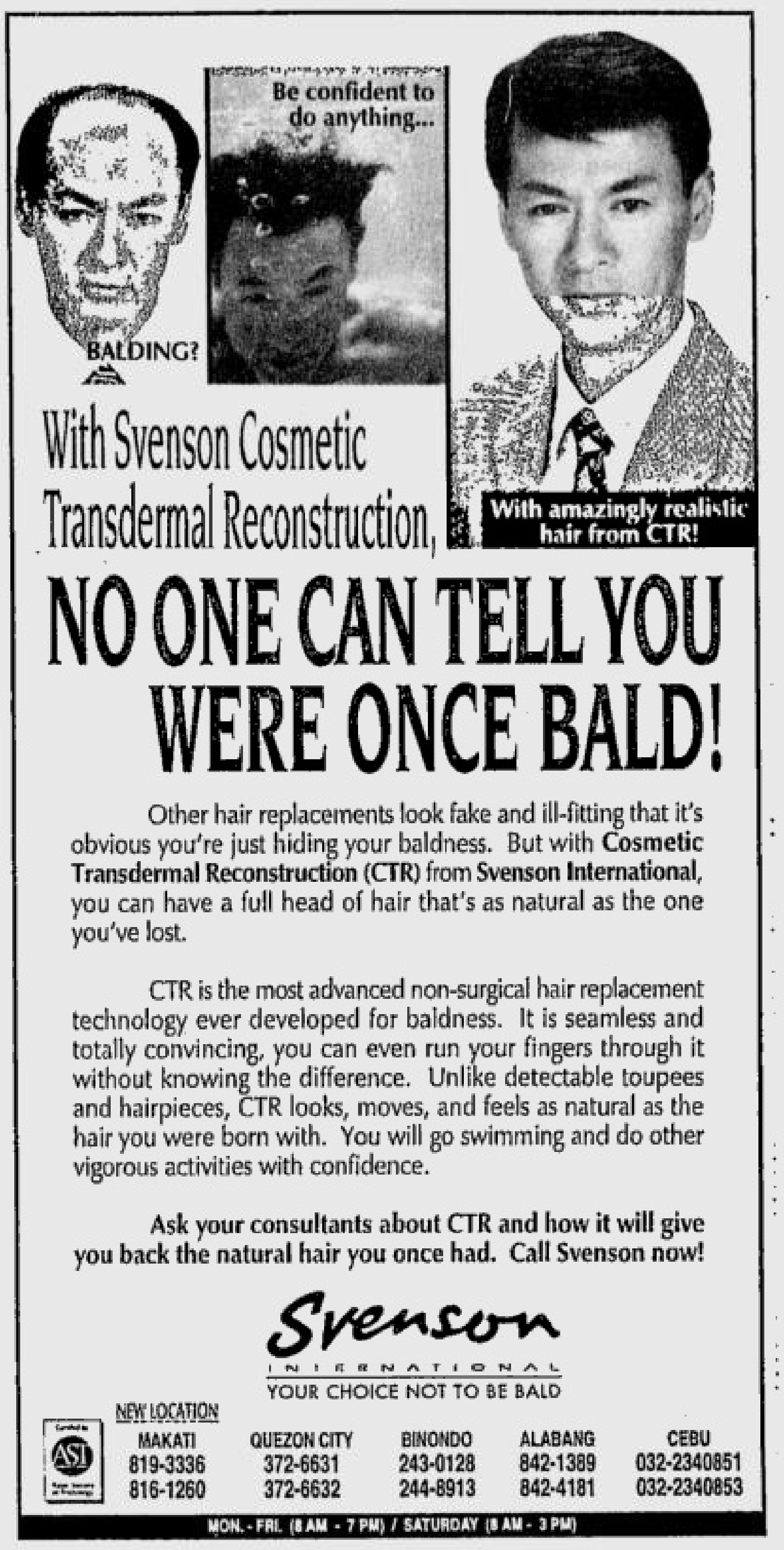

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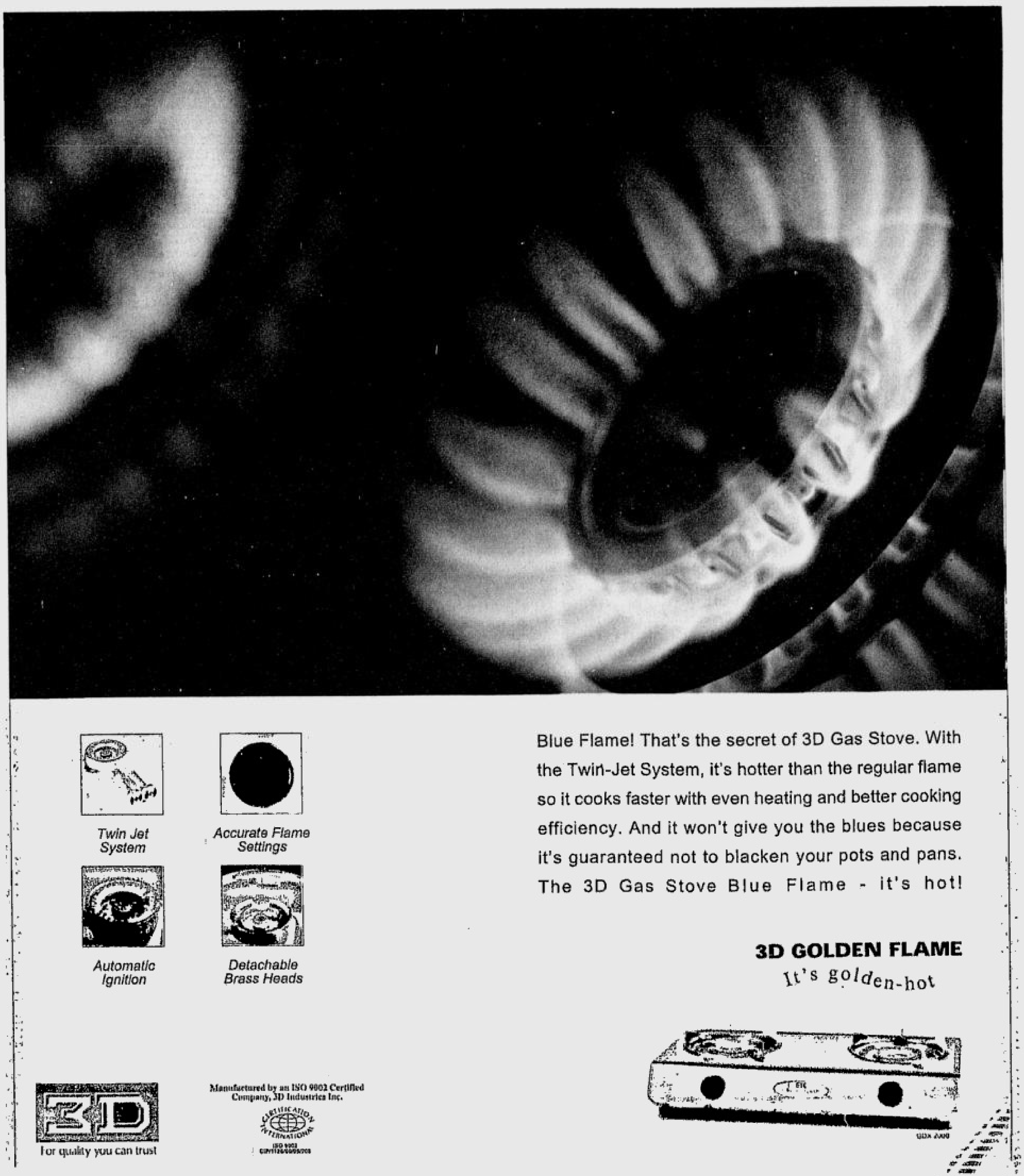

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'SK corruption could land RP in Guinness Book of World Records'

By Tina Santos

YOUNGSTERS register for July 15 SK polls.

ERIK ARAZAS

"THINGS have become worse now, age qualifications have been lowered, and we are faced with the prospect of electing officials who are, literally, still children."

With this declaration Caloocan City District 11 Rep. Edgar Erice yesterday condemned the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) as "a training ground not for efficient government leaders but for corrupt politicians."

Erice has proposed a bill calling for the abolition of the SK.

He added that the youth should be shielded from the debilitating effects of politics since they "become the unwitting pawns of unscrupulous politicians."

The SK election, whose special registration for youths 15-17 years old ended yesterday, will be held simultaneously with the barangay polls on July 15.

However, Erice said that during the committee hearing last week, he learned that the amendment involving the 15-17-year-old youths in the SK election was passed in haste and despite vehement objections by some commissioners.

Although he admitted that the SK could have been a good training ground for future leaders, Erice said this has not been the case in the SK.

Instead, he said, the SK, which used to be a movement with specific objectives of involving the youth in community service, has now become a tool and vehicle for the proliferation of corruption in government.

"How can this very young people disburse government funds? I don't think that the youth, especially at this point, should get involved in the government. SK is part of the government, they are part of the disbursement of funds, spending millions of pesos of government funds, and I don't think they are ready to dispose government funds," Erice said.

"They cannot even sign contracts in behalf of the government. How can they transact business with the contractors, suppliers? They only end up being bribed for government contracts," Erice added.

However, Erice admitted that the youth still has to have a representation in the barangay level and the local legislative assemblies, thus his proposal to create the Barangay Youth Council, which aims to adhere to the spirit of volunteerism.

He said there is a need to adopt another youth program where the involvement of youth will be limited to campus politics and debates on national issues and not so much on local politics.

He added that the youth should instead concentrate on issues concerning sports, education and environment.

Erice compared the SK to the youths of some non-government organizations, who he said turn out to be efficient leaders because "they are not involved in graft in corruption."

He cited the records of the Commission on Audit where, according to him, more than 50 percent of the SK has violated certain laws or housing procedures in the disbursement of government funds.

"Because what they undergo is not leadership training, but corruption and thievery 101," Erice said.

He said it is possible the Philippines will again be included in the Guinness Book of World Records—for having the youngest corrupt officials in the government.

2 Asistio nieces fall in shabu bust

FOUR suspected drug peddlers, including two women who identified themselves as relatives of former Caloocan City Mayor Boy Asistio, were arrested during a buy-bust operation Tuesday night in Caloocan City.

Senior Insp. Jose Valencia, chief of the Caloocan police drug enforcement unit, identified the suspects as Resurreccion Asistio, 27, and Rosemarie Asistio, 22, Erwin La Guardia, 21, all of Francisco Street, Caloocan City, and Perfecto Pablo, 20, of Camat Street, Kalaanan West, Caloocan.

The Asistios claimed their father Dante is the first cousin of the former city mayor.

Police said Resurreccion Asistio was nabbed during a buy-bust operation at around 11 p.m. on Francisco Street wherein PO2 Ferdinand Modina acted as poseur-buyer.

Seized from the suspect were plastic sachets containing undetermined amount of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

As Asistio was handing over the shabu, back-up operatives collared her and hauled her to the police headquarters.

Valencia said Resurreccion's sister and the two other suspects were nabbed during follow-up operations in the evening after they were caught sniffing shabu inside Asistio's residence.

Seized from them were an undetermined amount of shabu and other drug paraphernalia.

The Asistios, who have been detained, alleged that the team which conducted the operation tried to extort P8,000 from each of the suspects.

The DEU chief denied the accusation and said that a case has already been filed against the suspects. *Tina Santos*

St. Paul's coed . . .

(From page A21)

"I know you would not do it because you also have children," she answered in between tears.

The girl said she was then shocked upon realizing they were already in the vicinity of the Anito Lodge and Victoria Court.

Stunned, the girl told the professor that she had "come to terms with the fact" that she had to shift course.

The suspect allegedly played deaf and drove straight into the Anito Lodge.

Once they were inside the motel room, the girl sat on a chair crying.

The professor allegedly asked her again why she wanted to pass. She told him that it was because of her parents.

The suspect allegedly next sat in front of her and began touching her legs.

The said professor was about to remove her blouse when she ordered him to stop.

"Sir, I've accepted (the fact) that I should shift course," she said.

The suspect allegedly suggested that they stay longer in the motel.

She refused.

When they got to the front desk, the professor allegedly even got angry because he had paid a stiff price "for just 15 minutes."

The girl said the suspect later dropped her off at Robinson's Place but only after warning her not to tell anybody about what happened.

The complainant said she later told her boyfriend, friends, and parents about the incident.

She said she and her parents talked to St. Paul school officials, who allegedly told them that the suspect only admitted to taking her inside her car.

The suspect denied taking her to the motel, school officials insisted.

The Western Police District-Women's and Children section filed an attempted rape charge against the professor before the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

Police said it would be up to the fiscal to determine if there is enough basis to file charges before the courts.

Jude Estrada charged in Naia swindle case

By Agnes E. Donato

ESTRADA

JUDE Estrada, son of jailed ex-president Joseph Estrada, is now facing swindling charges after he allegedly failed to give his share in a franchise deal for the operation of a parking lot at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport II.

Complainant Percival Cruz, president of the International Foundation for the Support of the Education of Indigent Children (IFSEIC), accused Estrada of violating Article 315 of the Revised Penal Code before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office on Tuesday afternoon.

Cruz also claimed that Estrada, after the deal went sour, refused to return to him the P700,000 service fee which he gave to the ex-president's son.

In his complaint, Cruz said that he got to know Estrada through a certain Jun Belen, a member of Estrada's staff.

He said that in late 1999, Estrada offered his services to facilitate the granting of a contract for the IFSEIC to operate the parking lot at Naia II.

Estrada reportedly said that the contract would be awarded to the foundation if Cruz paid him P1.2 million in service fee.

"Jude Estrada claimed that he possessed power and influence over the manager of Naia II, and promised to deliver the contract within one month," Cruz said. "He also promised that if he failed to deliver, he would return the money to me."

Cruz said he then made a counter-offer of P700,000, with the balance to be paid upon the delivery of the contract.

He said that he gave Estrada a total of P703,000 in 12 separate transactions from December 1999 to February 2000.

After waiting many months for the contract, Cruz said Estrada finally admitted to him sometime in 2000 that the parking business would not push through.

Yet, while waiting for the release of the supposed franchise, Cruz learned that Estrada had offered his services to Leonard Transport Inc. president Victor Yam, "an apparent manifestation to deceive the complainant."

Cruz said he was able to get a refund of P170,000 from Estrada, but only after he had sent several demand letters to Estrada and his mother, Senator Loi Estrada.

The amount, he added, was given in two installments.

To date, Estrada allegedly still had to return the remaining P503,000 to Cruz, according to the complaint.

In a letter dated Aug. 17,2000, Cruz explained to Estrada that he was not a big businessman and that he needed the money badly.

"It can pay for many bills that are now piling up on my desk," Cruz said.

Cruz revealed in the same letter that Belen also promised him an appointment as director of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, while he tended to the airport contract.

Philets Jubilarians

THE PHILETS Foundation Inc. will celebrate its 5th Foundation Anniversary on Saturday at the Quezon City Sports Club, E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City, starting at 7 p.m.

Highlighting the affair will be the launching of the Philets Forum magazine and the recognition of the Philets Golden Jubilarians (Class 1952).

For further information, please contact the Philets Secretariat at tel. nos. 456-9339 or 928-5117 and look for Menchu.

Groups protest interchange closure at South Expressway

By Alcuin Papa

RESIDENTS from south of Metro Manila are protesting the closure of the Halang interchange of the South Luzon Expressway by the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB).

In a press conference yesterday in Laguna, the Movement for Responsible Enterprise (MRE), a group of businessmen based in Laguna, Batangas and Cavite, asked President Arroyo to order the TRB to lift the closure of the Halang interchange on May 30.

The group made the appeal to the President saying hundreds of thousands of residents in the area will be "adversely affected" by the TRB's move.

"The toll gates serve hundreds of thousands of families in hundreds of subdivisions in San Pedro and Biñan in Laguna and towns in Cavite. Should the TRB close the Halang toll gates, traffic in the national highways connecting these two towns to the expressway will go from terrible to unbearable," said Ray Junia, chair of the MRE.

The TRB, according to the group, recently announced it would close the interchange because real estate company Fil-Estate failed to turn over its right-of-way in the construction of the Halang toll gates.

Junia challenged the TRB to "seek other means of forcing compliance by Fil-Estate rather than closing the toll gates."

A public notice issued by the TRB recently said Fil-Estate has failed to comply with a provision in their previous agreement requiring it to turn over the right-of-way to the property. Hence, the TRB said it would close the toll gates on May 30.

Junia's group also filed yesterday a petition before the Court of Appeals asking for the issuance of a temporary restraining order against the TRB to prevent it from closing the toll gates.

5,000 pirated VCDs destroyed in QC

THE QUEZON City government and the Videogram Regulatory Board yesterday destroyed some 5,000 pirated video compact discs in front of City Hall.

Members of the Central Police District confiscated the VCDs when they raided a warehouse in Novaliches.

One alleged illegal manufacturer of fake VCDs was also arrested during the police operation.

In an interview, Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. admitted that pirated CDs are still being sold openly in various parts of the city.

But he also expressed hope that the continuous raids will deter vendors from selling pirated CDs.

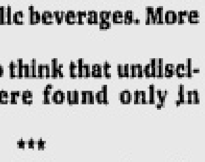
Belmonte, Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista and VRB Chairman Lualhati Buenafe saw to the destruction of the confiscated compact discs, said to be worth around P1 million.

Agnes E. Donato

Uniformed cops drinking: Ugly sight

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



I WAS at the lobby of the Apo View Hotel in Davao City on the evening of Sunday, May 19, when I saw two with men with a woman in tow enter the hotel's Pag-asa bar.

The guys were wearing collarless white T-shirts with some markings at the back. One of them was in slippers. Their attire was in complete disregard of the sign posted at the door of the bar: persons wearing collarless T-shirts or slippers not allowed.

I learned that one of them used to be mayor of a town in Cotabato. He has a ethnic-sounding name.

***

But it's none of anybody's business if the two guys were allowed by management to enter the classy bar in proper attire. That's management's problem. That's also the problem of the two guys who wanted to look like servants compared to other customers who are well-attired.

Perhaps the two guys told themselves, "So what if we're not properly dressed, we're richer than the other customers. And we have uniformed police bodyguards!" Their arrogance was shown by the fact that their Ford F-150 truck was parked right in front of the hotel's doorway.

The height of the arrogance of the two guys showed when their two uniformed police bodyguards, carrying M-16 Armalite automatic rifles with bandoliers of ammunition wrapped around their bodies, tried to walk into the hotel lobby on their way to the Pag-asa bar.

***

But the two cops, wearing PNP brown fatigue uniforms, apparently noticing the stares from other people at the hotel lobby, backed away and deposited their weapons in the Ford truck. *Marunong din pala silang mahiya!*

The two cops still followed their ward to the bar, their waistbands bulging with pistols tucked underneath their shirts.

When I went inside the bar late in the evening after dinner, I saw the same cops seated at a table in front of the bar's stage where singers were performing. They were a table away from the guy they were guarding.

A half empty bottle of cheap Spanish brandy was in front of them.

Cops on duty, especially those in full uniform, are forbidden from drinking alcoholic beverages. More so, in public.

I was naïve to think that undisciplined cops were found only in Metro Manila.

***

Two cops in brown combat fatigues guzzling cheap brandy in a hotel bar were an ugly sight. Truth to tell, it was my first time to see uniformed policemen nonchalantly drinking firewater in front of many civilians.

I found the sight very revolting, I asked a police colonel I met in the bar why he allowed the cops to guzzle alcohol in his presence. The colonel was enjoying the evening with his wife and daughter.

The colonel told me that he, too, found the sight revolting. But that he couldn't do anything about it since the two undisciplined cops were not assigned in his region, but in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

***

I found the colonel's answer more disgusting than the behavior of the two cops.

There was all the more reason for him, a police intelligence officer, to arrest the two cops for misbehaving out of their jurisdiction!

But I don't blame the colonel. He was enjoying the night with his wife and a daughter who's not yet in her teens. He was unarmed. If he accosted those cops, they could have resisted and the place would have been turned into a bloody mess.

***

Rampant illegal logging is taking place in Baganga, two towns away from my hometown of Manay, Davao Oriental.

Logs felled from the balding mountains of the town end up at the compound of the Baganga Plywood Corp. in barangay Lambajon. The firm is owned by Hudson Chua, a rich Chinese who was very close to former Natural Resources Secretary Antonio Cerilles.

My sources in Davao City say corrupt personnel at the community environment and natural resources office (Cenro) are in cahoots with illegal loggers. The Cenro personnel in Baganga were placed there by Cerilles, according to my sources.

***

A leading health maintenance organization (HMO) company is complaining that another firm is giving it unfair competition by using its name and its logo. The only difference is that the competitor uses two letters before the name.

This copycat firm is misleading the public, especially schoolteachers who make up the bulk of the clientele of the original company.

Why doesn't the Department of Trade and Industry act on the complaint?

***

Speaking of public schoolteachers, the schools superintendent in Davao Oriental, Juan Taloma, complains of harassment from a local politician.

The politician, Taloma says, asked for his transfer out of his present assignment because he wouldn't grant the politician's request that he withhold assignments of some teachers to far-flung areas in the province.

Remote areas in the Davao Oriental, the school official says, need teachers badly. But affected teachers wouldn't want to be assigned in those areas and asked the politician for their retention in the capital town Mati.

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11	CLOSED
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9	SPIDERMAN
10	STAR WARS

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6	SANA TOTOO NA
7	SPIDERMAN
8	STAR WARS

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	7 DAYS TO LIVE
2	CLOSED
3	SPIDERMAN
4	SNOW DOGS
5	AKALA MO
6	STAR WARS
7	CLOSED
8	K - PAX

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2	STAR WARS
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6	AKALA MO

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3	STAR WARS
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2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

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2	STAR WARS
3	AKALA MO
4	SPIDERMAN

SM CITY DAVAO
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1	STAR WARS
2	AKALA MO
3	DEVILS MASH
4	SPIDERMAN
5	STAR WARS
6	RETURN TO NEVERLAND

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
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1
2
3
4

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THE PODIUM

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MOVIE GUIDE

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6 GOLD (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	IN THE BEDROOM
8	AKALA MO
9	AKALA MO
10	BENEATH LOCHNESS

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2	
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4	
5	
6 (DTS)	

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7	
8	

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2	
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3	
4	

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3	
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5	BENEATH LOCHNESS
6	DEATH TO SMOOCHY
7 (DTS)	STAR WARS
8 (SDDS)	STAR WARS
9 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN

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2	BENEATH LOCHNESS
3	IS SWELLING
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8	FRUIT IS SWELLING
9	VIDEOKE KING

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3	
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7 (DOLBY)	AKALA MO
8	STAR WARS

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3 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
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4	AKALA MO
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2	AKALA MO
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4 (DTS)	STAR WARS

Lianas Cinema
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1 (SDDS)	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	SANA TOTOO NA
4 (DTS)	AKALA MO

Lianas MovieCity
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1 (DOLBY)	STAR WARS
2	K-PAX
3 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
4	SANA TOTO NA
5	AKAL MO

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
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1	STAR WARS
2	AKALA MO
3	SANA TOTOO NA

Olivarez Los Baños
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2	AKALA MO
3	SPIDERMAN

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2	PUKYUTAN
3	ROLLER BALL

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1	
2	
3	

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1	

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2	AKALA MO
3	SPIDERMAN

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1	K PAX
2	SPIDERMAN
3	STAR WARS
4	SANA TOTOO NA

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3 (DTS)	STAR WARS
4	K-PAX

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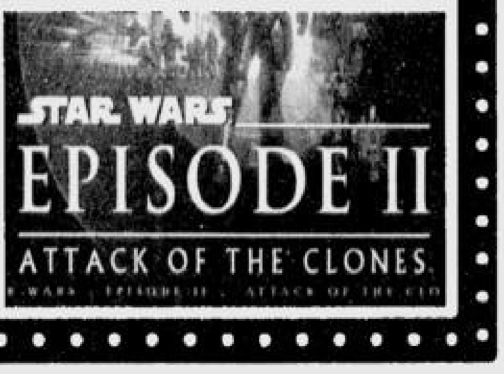

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8	IN THE BEDROOM
9	SPIDERMAN
10	BENEATH LOCHNESS

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2	SPIDERMAN
3	DEATH TO SMOOCHY
4	BENEATH LOCHNESS
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6	IN THE BEDROOM
7	STAR WARS 2

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1	SPIDERMAN
2	STAR WARS 2
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4	BENEATH LOCHNESS
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6	DEATH TO SMOOCHY
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8	AKALA MO

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4	AKALA MO
5	SPIDERMAN
6	AKALA MO
7	SPIDERMAN
8	DEATH TO SMOOCHY

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2	DEATH TO SMOOCHY
3	BENEATH LOCHNESS
4	AKALA MO
5	STAR WARS 2
6	STAR WARS 2

Bacolod
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3	AKALA MO
4	DEEP END
5	SPIDERMAN
6	DEVIL MAN

Iloilo
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1	STAR WARS 2
2	SNOW DOGS
3	AKALA MO
4	DEEP END
5	SEVEN DAYS TO LIVE
6	SPIDERMAN

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Sn Fernando, Pamp 875- 1927
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5	JASON X
6	STAR WARS 2

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JOYCE Jimenez (center) stars with Michelle Bayle (left) and Nancy Castiglione.

'Imported' beauties star in Piolo-Joyce movie

BESIDES Joyce Jimenez, leading lady of Piolo Pascual, two other "imported" beauties are featured in "I think I'm in Love," Regal Films' romance-comedy entry to the Manila Film Festival in June (12 to 24).

Michelle Bayle and Nancy Castigleone who are cast as two of the girlfriends of Piolo the playboy whom Joyce, as perfume saleslady of a department store, can't seem to pin down.

Michelle and Nancy are both from Canada, but since childhood, they have developed an emotional attachment to the Philippines where both their mothers came from.

Michelle's mother was former Bb. Pilipinas finalist and Miss Manila Maricel Quintos, who comes from a political clan in Manila where a street is named after them. Maricel was the same beauty queen who inspired Maribel Lopez, one-time Bb. Pilipinas-Universe, to try her luck in the beauty pageant.

Nancy's father is also a foreigner, like Michelle's (the former's is Italian and the latter's is Canadian). Since they returned to the Philippines, a home country which they used to just regularly visit, Michelle and Nancy have imbibed even more Filipino values.

The two young stars have also learned to speak Tagalog fluently, which is very evident in "I Think I'm in Love."

Nancy, who is a familiar face in many TV commercials, makes her big screen debut in the movie.

"It has always been my dream to eventually settle down in the Philippines and pursue a show biz career," said Michelle.

"Same here," said Nancy.

Both girls have been winning the hearts of the Filipino moviegoers because of their friendliness, beauty and talent, just like the way Joyce Jimenez did when she began her show biz career.

Directed by Maryo J. delos Reyes, "I Think I'm in Love" marks the first team-up of Joyce and Piolo.

The movie is predicted to give a big boost to the careers not only of Joyce and Piolo, but those of Michelle and Nancy.

Baguio's Spirits to haunt Malate

FOR MANY people, a visit to Baguio City, whatever the time of year, is never complete without at least one night spent at the Spirits Bar and Restaurant.

Fifteen years after it opened in 1987, in a stately pre-war house long rumored to be haunted, Spirits has become the longest-running party place in the Philippines. It is still operating long after its contemporaries in Manila, like Rumors, Mars and Faces, have closed their doors for good. Spirits has become as much a symbol of Baguio as the city's succulent strawberries.

Its appeal is manifold: the "haunted" ambience, the location in the center of the city (at the corner of Otek and Carino streets, right next to Burnham Park), the good food and the fact that it is in an essentially laid-back and non-party place like Baguio.

This success has prompted its owners to bring Spirits to Manila. This month, Spirits Malate opens, fittingly enough, in a proud, old corner house in the heart of the district, on Nakpil and Bocobo streets.

"I think it's about time we brought Spirits to Malate," says owner Michael Lina. "Fifteen years is a long interval and we think Manila is ready for it. We're banking on the renown of Spirits to bring back the joys of partying in Manila."

Lina envisions Spirits Malate to be the "first and last place" people will go to in Malate, where they can dance to club music, which Malate's small bars and restaurants do not offer. He hopes Spirit Baguio's old patrons, now yuppies, as well as the kids who now prefer to go to, say, Libis, for their "gimmicks," will be drawn to Spirits Malate.

Like the original place in Baguio, Spirits Malate retains the "old house" ambience, with a spacious ground floor and the dinging area on the upper floor which also has a deck for those who wish to lounge and view the action on the street. The long, narrow corridor where the hip club Kemistry used to be is turned into a long bar, to be manned by female bartenders.

"We introduced the Coyote Ugly concept at Spirits Baguio last Holy Week and it was a huge hit," says Lina. "The girls served drinks and performed on top of the bar in two choreographed sets. The crowd just went wild."

Since Spirits Baguio has always been known for its good food and music, Spirits Malate will attempt to deliver the same, with an extensive menu of *pica-pica*, grilled favorites and sandwiches prepared by a chef who used to work in New York.

"I'm excited," says Lina. "There's much we can do with such a large space (the two floors can house 1,000 people) and I think it would be fun to play with different concepts, to attract kids, the young professionals, etc. Bars and restaurants come and go but it's different when you have a dance floor."

Zoren raring . . .

Frompage A25

from Ogie and Michelle on how to prevent the domestic front from turning into a battlefront.

"A Better Man" boasts of 12 original songs, 11 of which are Ogie's own compositions.

To test or not to test

I HAD a blast when I was invited to be part of the panel in "Debate with Mare and Pare" last week. The debate centered on whether celebrities should be obliged to undergo a routine drug test. This was in the wake of the never-ending Ecstasy controversy.

The other guests were my UP comrade **Bibeth Orteza**, **Melissa Mendez**, Manila Bulletin's **Shirley Pizarro**, **Zoren Legazpi**, **German Moreno**, **Efren Reyes Jr.** and **Jun Nardo** of People's Tonight. We were lumped into two contrasting groups (pro and anti drug testing), but after the show we all agreed that drug testing should only be done if a star voluntarily submits himself to it.

As I said in "Debate," in addition to a drug test, it would be best if some stars are given a polygraph test because denying, evading and lying have already become second nature in the biz.. The "E"-enie-minie-moe game of pinpointing stars hooked on "E" ought to be brought to a halt.

But that can only happen if the guilty parties admit that they are "partying" (that's how Ecstacy addicts refer to their "E" trips). If not, show biz folk don't have much of a choice but to be constantly crucified for a crime they do not commit. As they say, there's always a rotten apple in the basket but why let it spoil the entire harvest?

Pops' best

POPS Fernandez's upcoming album is said to be her very best so far.

The musical genius behind the Concert Queen's album is The CompanY's **Moy Flores**, whose many hit compositions include **Aiza Seguerra**'s "Pagdating ng Panahon." Moy told me that when **Martin Nievera** listened to Pop's new album he was so moved and impressed.

With the many changes in my good friend Pops' life, I'm sure her songs now have deeper significance. And since she has metamorphosed into a stronger and more beautiful woman, she has outgrown those weepy, overly sentimental songs. Gone are hush-hush and the mush, on with the pizzazz!

For feedback, e-mail friends _at_dsquare@yahoo.com

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	AKALA MO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	BENEATH LOCHNESS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	STAR WARS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SPIDERMAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	STAR WARS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	FRUIT IS SWELLING
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	DEATH TO SMOOCHY
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	SPIDERMAN
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	STAR WARS
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	KAULAYAW / SNAKE CHARMER
ODEON	STAR WARS
ODEON-2	SANA TOTOO NA
ROBEN	SANA TOTOO NA
TANDEM-1	ITLOG
TANDEM-2	IKA-7 GLORYA
TIMES	OCEAN 11 / ALI
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	SANA TOTOO NA
REMAR	AKALA MO
REMAR-2	STAR WARS
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SANA TOTOO NA
B	KAPIRASONG GUBAT . . .
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-61 TO 70
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	STAR WARS: EPISODE 2
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	SANA TOTOO NA
CINEMA-2	BUKANG BIBIG
CINEMA-3	K-PAX
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	STAR WARS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-6	JASON-X
CINEMA-7	VIDEOKE KING
CINEMA-8	SCORPION KING
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	STAR WARS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	STAR WARS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	STAR WARS
CINEMA-12	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-14	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-15	SPIDERMAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	SPIDERMAN
CINEMA-2	IN THE BEDROOM
CINEMA-3	STAR WARS: EPISODE 2
CINEMA-4	STAR WARS: EPISODE 2
CINEMA-5	DEATH TO SMOOCHY
CINEMA-6	STAR WARS: EPISODE 2
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
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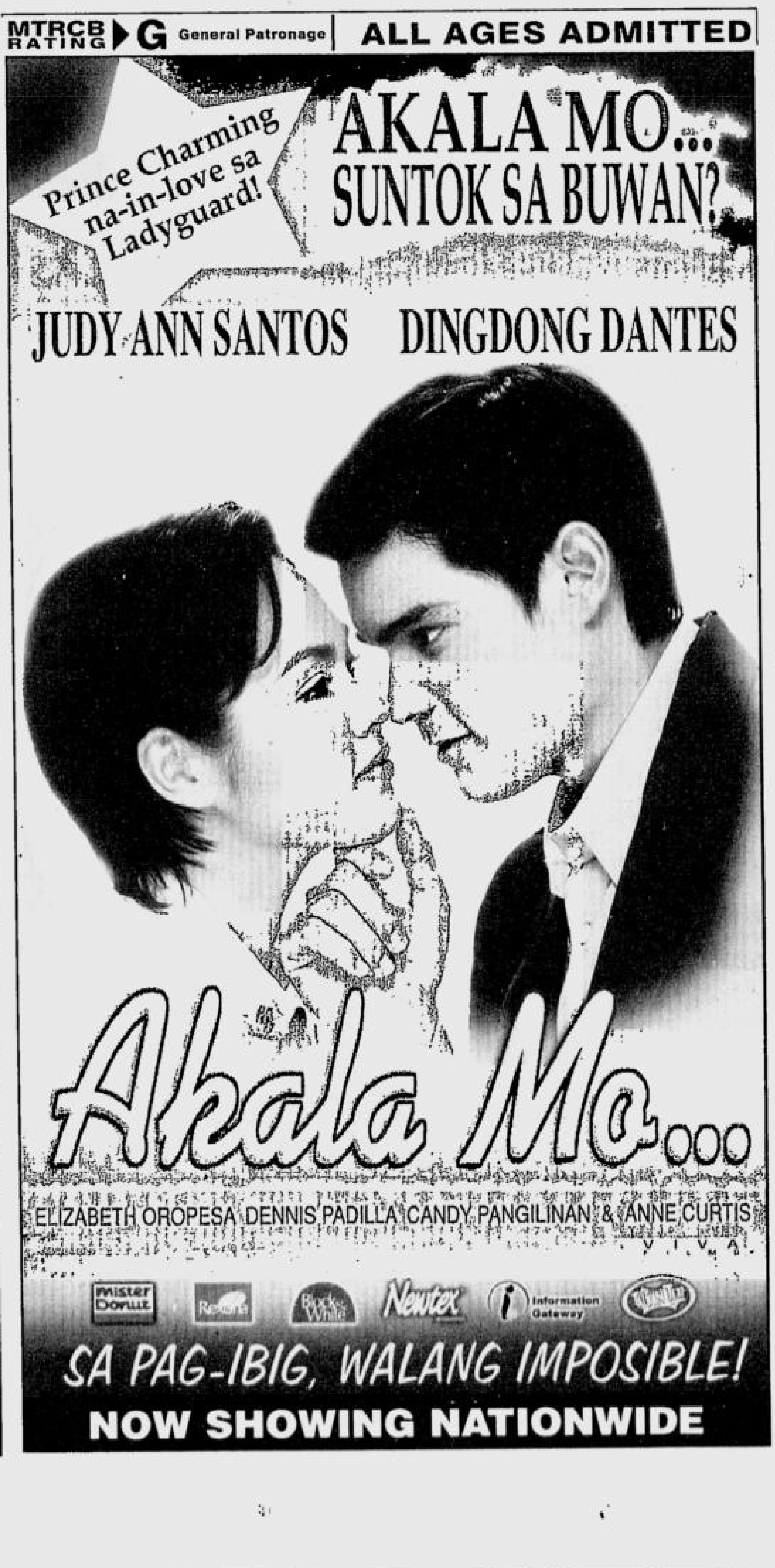

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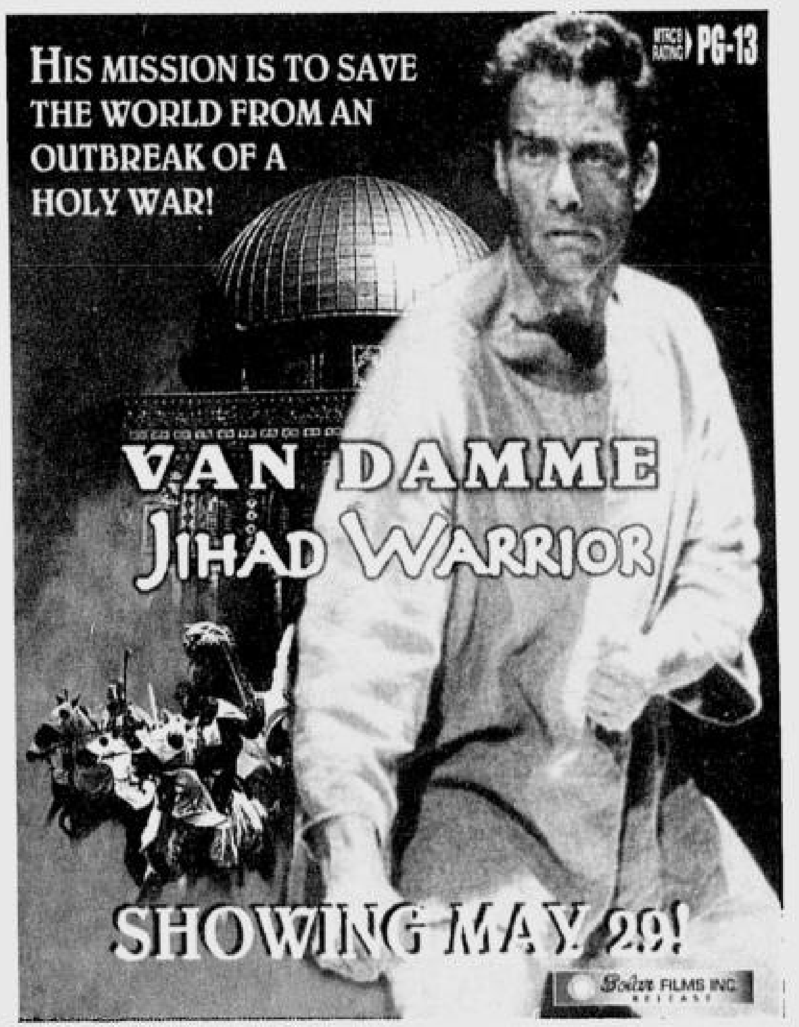

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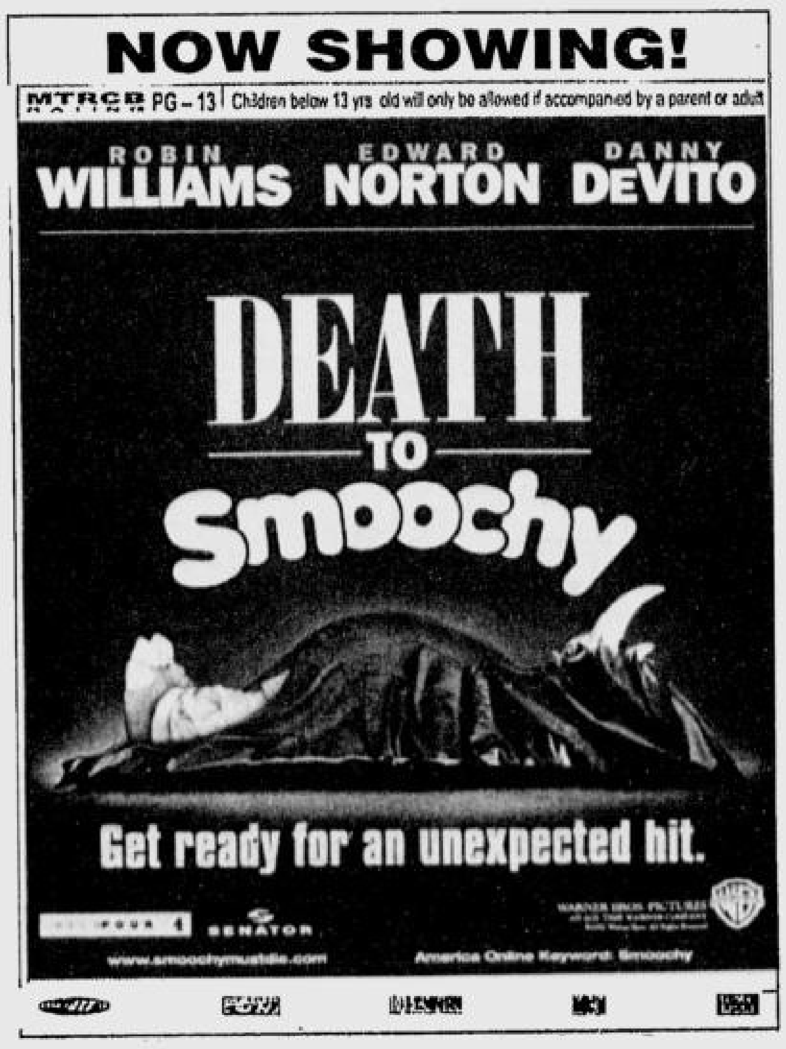

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

Over-the-top treatment

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE NEW "Whattamen" (Channel 2, Wednesdays) is an hour longer and has acquired the services of **Joyce Jimenez**, among other new talents. Joyce plays the new next-door neighbor of **Marvin Agustin, Dominic Ochoa** and **Ai-Ai de las Alas**.

The first episode of the "expanded" sitcom last week focused on the enmity and rivalry between Ai-Ai and Joyce's has-been movie-star auntie (**Melanie Marquez**). They were aghast to discover that they shared the same Japanese papa (**Ricky Davao**).

The rivalry got so fierce that Melanie even hired a cab driver to run Ai-Ai down! At this point, Joyce put her foot down and told her ditzy aunt to stop being so manically homicidal.

This was decidedly over-the-top, but that's the treatment that this sitcom tries to push—not just in its actors' performances but also in the way that the show's cameras are used to comment on or exaggerate the action.

The actors constantly step out of character and address the camera to diss another performer, or for any number of other reasons. This is supposed to be the height of comic irreverence, and the effect is expected to be uproariously funny. In actuality, it's only occasionally diverting, and more often merely brash and loud.

Perhaps the "irreverent" technique could be used more selectively? It would also help if the male regulars on the show would stop acting like salivating satyrs in heat, constantly peering down women's bosoms and up their legs, and generally making a sex-crazed spectacle of themselves. Down, boys!

'Single'

ON MAY 23 at 9:30 p.m. on ABC-5, "Single" will bring interactive and reality-TV touches to come to bear on the age-old quest for love. Each week, the show follows a Single Guy around, in search for the love of his life.

Three finalists remain—**Joel Trinidad, Lee Espino** and **Marvel Julian**. In the end, however, there can be only one. Their fate is in viewers' hands. Vote on www.single.com or via SMS by typing in TV Single <name of chosen guy> and send to 2333 (Globe) or 288 (Smart).

'Murder by Numbers'

IN **BARBET Schroeder**'s "Murder by Numbers," **Sandra Bullock** and **Ben Chaplin** play FBI agents investigating two young serial killers. At first, the two crimebusters clash, but their determination to get the goods on the killers before they can murder other people compels them to work together in the end.

Bullock is a popular star, but Chaplin is just starting to get noticed for his strong performances in films like "The Truth About Cats and Dogs" (with **Uma Thurman**), "Washington Square" (with **Jennifer Jason Leigh**), "The Thin Red Line" (with **Sean Penn**), and "Lost Souls" (with **Winona Ryder**).

He will next be seen in "Birthday Girl" with **Nicole Kidman**. Clearly, his time to shine has come!

Feedback

FROM **Ryan R. Salas** of Quezon City: "With the current popularity of animated movies all over the world, it's time for a producer to develop a Filipino animated movie.

"Many Filipino artists are hired to do cartoons for producers in the States and in Europe, so we already have the needed skills. All that is needed is a really good storyline and enough budget to make the production visually impressive.

"Since it's proven itself to be an innovative film company, I hope Star Cinema will include a full-length animated movie in its future plans.

"It may take a long time in doing, but if it's successful, it can continue to make money for the studio, both here and abroad, for years to come."

Edward Norton on Robin Williams

EDWARD Norton is an acclaimed actor, but he says he felt like a tyro when he worked with **Robin Williams** in "Death to Smoochy."

"My really great discovery was how much and how well Robin works with other actors. We're familiar with how incredibly free-associative he is. After working with him, he puts me in mind of that Mark Twain line about the best extemporaneous speech being the one that's the most meticulously rehearsed.

"Robin doesn't just splatter stuff all over the place. He riffs, but then he hones in on the stuff that's good, and keeps refining it until it's really great. I admire that!"

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Zoren raring to show off his and Carmina's twins

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

ZOREN Legazpi is raring to show all and sundry how adorable his twins with **Carmi-na Villaroel** are.

The proud dad said, "If I had my way I would want my babies' pictures splashed all over the papers but Carmina's lawyer who's handling her annulment case advised us that it's not yet the proper time."

Zoren relishes his role as a dad so much that he couldn't care less if people spot him and the twins in the mall.

"Up to now, no one has been able to take stolen shots of the twins and myself when we go malling," he said.

"I don't mind the stares. I'm too happy to be bothered by anything now."

Now that Father's day is just around the corner, Zoren surely is all set to celebrate it to the hilt.

Ogie and Michelle's secret

NOT all singers can write and not all songwriters can sing. **Ogie Alcasid** is one of the few who was born with both gifts.

And as if that were not enough, he also has such a selfless heart. Ogie is not one who would keep his talent to himself. He willingly composes for other artists and has no qualms about other bands recording his hit songs. Take the case of one of his best compositions, "Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang," which Freestyle did a version of and which has now become a smash hit.

I teased Ogie: "Why not reserve all your compositions for yourself alone? How do you feel when a song you previously recorded is interpreted by another artist and that version eclipses your own?"

He smiled. "I'm flattered when other singers sing my songs. I believe that every version gives a song a new life. There's no limit to how a song can gain more meaning."

Ogie has come up with "Ikaw Sana," the first single from his latest album, "A Better Man" from Viva Records. He wrote the song in a span of 30 minutes.

"I wanted to expound on what it feels like to be in that sort of situation," he said. "It picks up from where 'Bakit Ngayon Ka Lang' ends."

"You seem to have a penchant for writing songs about a never-never kind of love," I said.

He laughed. "I know many people who are trapped in such a relationship. I'm lucky not to be in that dilemma. I can never betray the trust of my wife **Michelle (van Eimeren)** because she makes me whole. Our life here on earth is too short for me not to give her my unconditional love."

Ogie and Michelle are eagerly awaiting the arrival of their second child in September. Their first-born **Leila** is now 7 years old.

Unlike most show biz couples, the Alcasids have been spared from nasty intrigues that usually tear apart show biz marriages. Their formula? "I guess the secret is to try to maintain your privacy as much as you can," he said. "You should keep marriage and family matters within your home. Michelle has been so supportive and has decided to devote her time to Leila, me and her pottery."

Star couples ought to take a crash course

ZOREN/A24

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STAR WARS - GP 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00	DEATH TO SMOOCHY-P13 12:05, 2:25, 4;45,7:05, 9:30	STAR WARS - GP 11:45, 2:40, 5:35, 8:30

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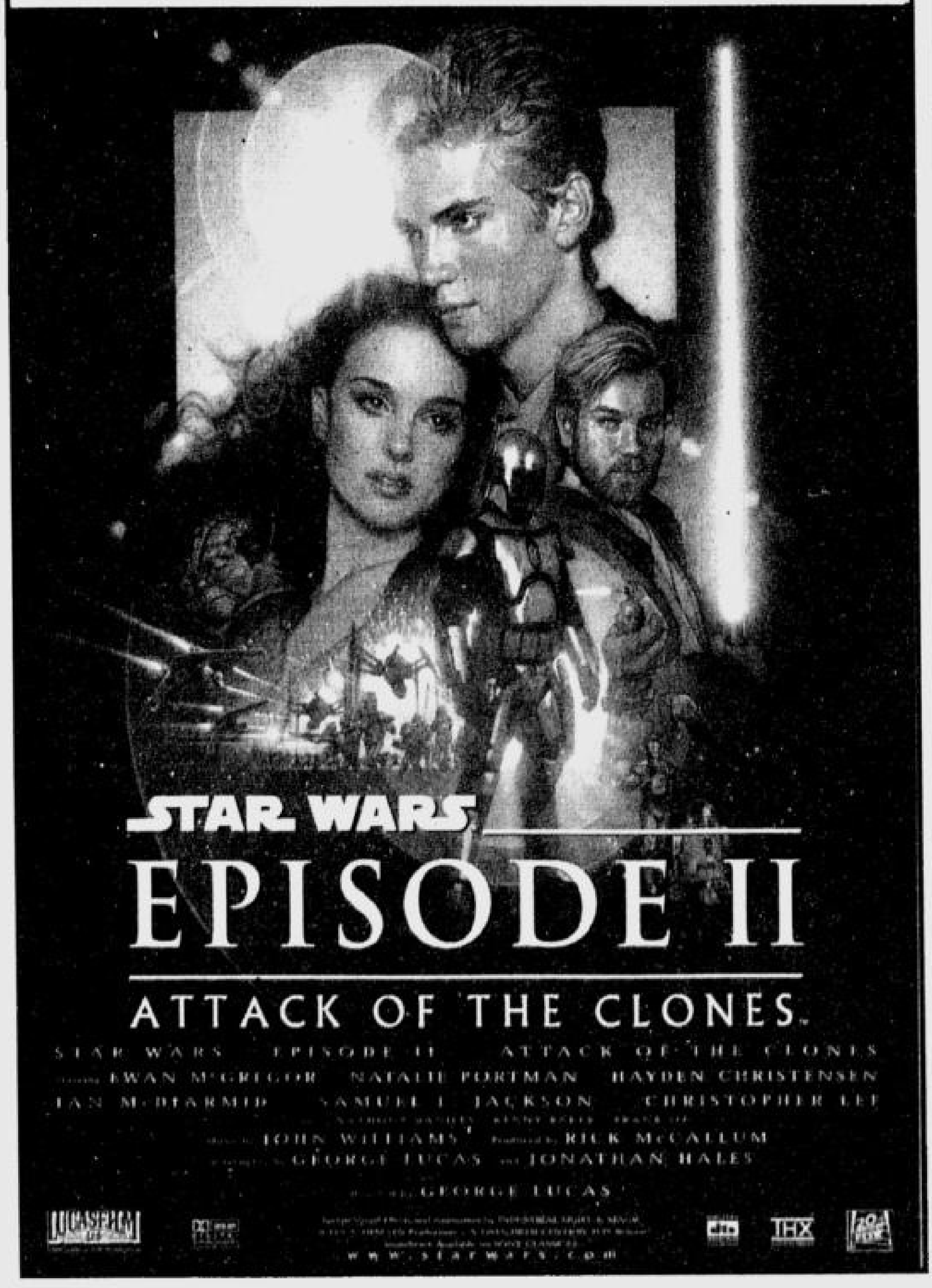

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1 SPIDERMAN	1 IN THE BEDROOM	4 K-PAX	1 SPIDERMAN	1 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2
2 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2	2 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2	5 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2	2 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2	2 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2
3 AKALA MO	3 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2 11:10, 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	6 SPIDERMAN	3 AKALA MO	3 SPIDERMAN
4 STAR WARS: EPISODE 2		7 DEATH TO SMOOCHY	4 MARTIN NIEVERA BACK ONSTAGE May 24, 25, 31 & June 1	4 DEATH SMOOCHY
				5 IN THE BEDROOM

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10. Number of children:
11. Father's Name:
12. Mother's Name:
Their Address:
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BUSINESS

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** *Assistant Editor* **Corrie S. Narisma**

PNOC unit disputes award of ₱600-M drilling project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE STATE-OWNED PNOC Energy Development Corp. yesterday questioned Philippine Geothermal Inc.'s evaluation of bids for the $12-million (P600-million) drilling contract, saying PGI was vague about the specifications and point system of the bidding.

PNOC-EDC chair Sergio F. Apostol said in a statement the state firm's bid of $3,653,850 per well was $623,725 or about P31 million lower than that of the company which was awarded the contract.

This added up to a P91-million difference as PGI's contract covered the drilling of three wells.

"This amount is a huge differential considering that National Power Corp. and not PGI will ultimately pay for this drilling contract," Apostol said. "(Electricity) consumers will eventually shoulder this cost."

Also, PNOC-EDC said the winning bidder—Century Drilling—was an Australian and not an all-Filipino firm as PGI claimed.

"As a government contractor for power generation, PGI should also be bound by the same standards of transparency, fairness and public accountability for its transactions," Apostol said.

The former Leyte congressman also said

PNOC/ B7

US vows support for RP bid to join Egmont Group

/ B10

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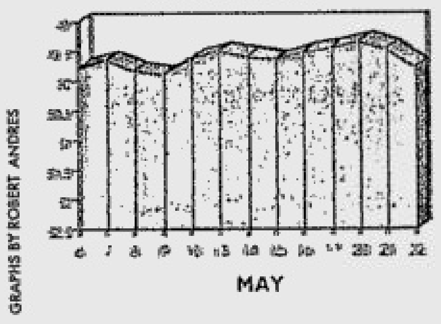
PESO - DOLLAR



GRAPHS BY ROBERT ANDRES

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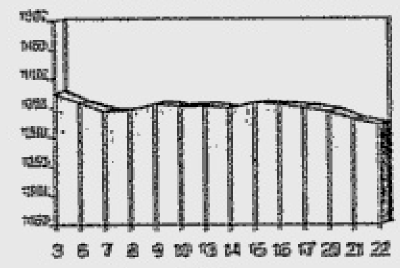
May 22, 2002

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCK MARKET

Shares down 0.7%

SHARES finished lower yesterday as foreign selling dragged down key index stocks, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange index ended down 9.12 points, or 0.7 percent, at 1319.58, adding to Tuesday's 1.1-percent loss. The index has lost 2.8 percent since May 16.

BPI Securities assistant vice president Spencer Yap said the market decline was sparked by weak first-quarter results and volatility in US markets following attacks in Israel.

Still, the market managed to end off its lows on select bargain hunting, said A&A Securities research head Astro del Castillo.

"Minimal bargain hunting trimmed the index loss," he said. "It seems like the selling pressure is tapering off. I won't be surprised if in the coming days we'll see a technical rally."

Del Castillo said the market may have already discounted the generally weak first-quarter corporate results and the government's failure to stay within its first-quarter budget deficit target. *AP*

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PSE junks plan to extend trading hours to 4 p.m.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange has junked a plan to implement a longer afternoon trading session from 2 to 4 p.m. due to opposition from many local brokers.

However, PSE chair Vivian Yuchengco said she would continue to campaign for the extension of afternoon trading hours in order to put the local stock market in sync with the global markets.

A survey earlier conducted by the PSE's floor trading and arbitrage committee (FTAC) showed that only 21 percent of member-brokers agreed with the foreign brokers' proposal to extend trading up to 4 p.m. On the other hand, 51 percent voted to retain the existing 1-2:30 p.m. trading slot while 20 percent wanted a 1:30-3 p.m. session to extend the lunch break by 30 minutes.

"(Foreign brokers) control 70 percent of the market's volume. They may not have the numbers in the survey but they contribute the most," Yuchengco said in an interview.

"London is open at 3 p.m. (local equivalent time). Look at Hong Kong. They are extending their trading hours up to 5 p.m. and here we are we don't want to go global. If you want to hit the foreign market we've got to go global," she said.

Yuchengco said she would not want to impose her will on the PSE membership but she would like to talk to them further and convince them about the merits of longer trading hours.

"It's on the back burner because they're making that a political thing. It's not a political thing. If we decide about it, we'll just put it in place," she said.

"If you're trying to perk up the market and even if they're saying that the volumes don't prove it, which comes first? Do you wait for it (bigger trading volume) or do you open for it?" she noted.

Aside from those opposing the 2-4 p.m. extension, there are also some members pushing for a return to half-day trading. There was also a proposal to change the current trading hours to 9 a.m.-1 p.m. without any lunch break.

"But I don't think you should do that because I think you'll be moving backward," Yuchengco said.

For their part, the foreign brokers who were pushing for a 2-4 p.m. trading extension explained that European investors usually dealt real-time in Asia by working at 6-8 a.m. London time, which would translate to this time slot in local time. They also said this was the same time when all Asian markets—Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand and Indonesia, were open.

The PSE used to be one of the few remaining stock exchanges in the world that operated on a half-day basis, opening at 9:30 a.m. and closing at noon. It began afternoon trading last Feb. 20 to take advantage of improving market sentiment, but only up to 2:30 in the afternoon after a one-hour lunch break ending 1 p.m.

Ayala data center sees profit in 2003

By Abigail L. Ho

AYALA Corp. subsidiary AyalaPort Makati sees profitability by next year and a recovery of its P1-billion data center investment in three to four years.

AyalaPort president Mark Anthony Javier said in an interview yesterday that the company has more than 20 clients, a lot of which were big companies from different sectors, giving it enough business to consider expanding to areas outside Luzon.

Its existing clients include financial service providers as well as distribution and manufacturing companies.

"We're expecting a few hundreds more this year," he said.

Javier said the Ayala firm had already spent about half of its projected P1-billion investment since its launch in October last year.

"We don't see another infusion from Ayala Corp. unless we put up another data center. We are actually planning to, probably in Cebu," he said.

AYALA/ B3

FIRST GEN

Lopezes eye new investors

THE LOPEZ infrastructure arm First Philippine Holdings Corp. is talking to two potential investors for the sale of up to 28 percent of additional stake in profitable power firm First Generation Holdings Inc.

FPH chief operating officer Elpidio Ibañez said FPH would bring in more investors to First Gen after last year's buy-in deal with Japanese trading giant Sumitomo and Aidec FG Power Corp. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Asian Infrastructure Development Co. Ltd.

Asked up to how much further dilution FPH would accept, he said the company would still want to end up with 60-percent control of the power firm.

FPH earlier reduced its stake in First Gen to 88 percent after the sale of a 12-percent equity to the two groups. A 3.81-percent stake was sold to Sumitomo for $20 million last December, and another 8 percent worth $40 million was previously sold to Aidec in August.

Ibañez said the potential investors were now undertaking a due diligence on First Gen, which focuses on power generation and other energy-related businesses.

Industry sources said one of the potential investors had indicated interest to acquire as much as 20 percent of First Gen, which could thus yield at least $100 million in proceeds for parent firm FPH based on valuation used on the earlier Sumitomo and Aidec deals.

The entry of new investors in First Gen is part of its preparations for the privatization of National Power Corp.

First Gen, which is valued at more than $500 million, has a 60-percent interest in First Gas Power Corp., which operates the 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita and the 500-mw San Lorenzo power plants in Batangas. These gas-powered facilities are two of the three power plants with existing supply contracts with the Malampaya gas-to-power consortium.

The power firm also has a 37.3-percent stake in the Bauang Private Corp., which runs the 225-mw diesel-fired facility in La Union, as well as a 58-percent stake in Panay Power Corp., which operates a 72-mw diesel-fired power plant.

First Gen expects its generating assets to have a total installed capacity of 1,725 mw by the middle of this year.

BSP to pick loan underwriter today

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has reportedly narrowed down to JP Morgan Chase, Citibank and Standard Chartered Bank the choice of the underwriter that would handle its upcoming $500- to $750-million borrowing.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura declined to name the investment banks even as he admitted that the committee chaired by Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. was asked to submit for Monetary Board approval today its top three choices among the more than 10 underwriting offers.

Buenaventura said the policy-making board would also decide today whether the borrowing would be done through a bond issue or a straight loan or private placement.

Well-placed sources said the three foreign banks submitted the best offers for both a bond issue or a five-year syndicated loan.

Sources said the BSP committee held a telephone conference with the underwriters the other day. A source pointed out that the central bank might choose one of the three and ask the remaining two to co-lead the transaction, which is set in June.

The other firms which offered to handle the borrowing were Morgan Stanley, HSBC, Deutsche Bank and Credit Suisse First Boston.

Buenaventura said the proceeds of the borrowing would be used to prepay $750 million in BSP debts obtained in April 2001 and maturing in 2004. This borrowing was more expensive compared with those maturing in 2003, the BSP chief said.

Republic of the Philippines
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
National Capital Judicial Region
Branch 117, Pasay City

IN THE MATTER OF DECLARATION OF INSOLVENCY OF MERCEDES CHUA DOING BUSINESS UNDER THE NAME AND STYLE OF 'BENISON MOTORS'

MERCEDES CHUA,
Petitioner

SP. PROC. NO. 02-0017

ORDER

A verified petition has been filed by *MERCEDES CHUA*, praying that upon filing the petition, an order be issued declaring her as an insolvent person. It appearing that the petition is sufficient in form and substance, petitioner Mercedes Chua is hereby declared *INSOLVENT*.

Accordingly, Sheriff Reynaldo Mulat is hereby directed to take possession of, and safely keep until the appointment of a receiver or assignee, all the deeds, vouchers, books of account, papers, notes, bonds, bills and securities of the petitioner and all her real and personal property, estate and effects, except such as may be by law exempt from execution.

Payment to the petitioner of any debts due to her and the delivery to the petitioner, or any person acting for her, of any property belonging to her, and the transfer of any property by her, is hereby prohibited.

A meeting of all creditors for the purpose of choosing assignee of the estate will be held on 3 June 2002 at 2:00 O'clock in the afternoon at the courtroom of this branch.

Let this order be published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer for three (3) consecutive weeks before 3 June 2002.

SO ORDERED.

Given in chambers, this 18th day of April 2002, Pasay City, Metro Manila

HENRICK F. GINGOYON
Judge

HMR group

HMR AUCTION CENTRE

We invite you to our

2nd AUCTION OF THE MONTH
Dr. A Santos Ave., San Antonio Sucat Paranaque City
On May 25, 2002 @ 10:30 a.m. PROMPT (Saturday)
Registration: 9:00 a.m onwards
Refundable Deposit: PHP 5,000.00 (upon registration)
Viewing: May 24, 2002 @ 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m

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- *Native basket*
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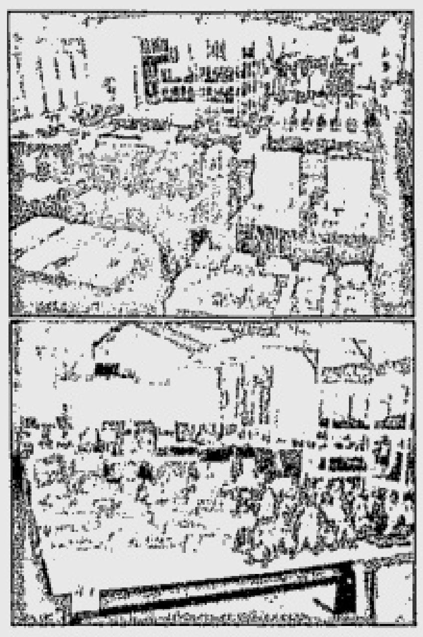

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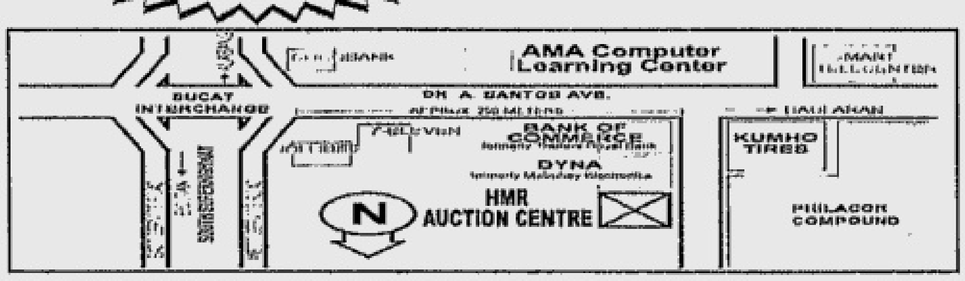

For further information please call FERDIE, ALEX, RAMIL at
Tel . Nos. 825-5470 to 74 or 825-5479

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
INTER-AGENCY BID AND AWARD COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY
FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS) of the Department of Budget and Management invites G-EPS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply and delivery of RUBBER SHOES for the PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE.

The approved budget for the purchase of 15,400 pairs rubber shoes to be bid is P17,740,800.00. The bid documents will be available for issuance at the PS-Purchasing Division starting **May 16, 2002**.

All interested parties are required to attend the Pre-bid Conference that will be held on **May 28, 2002**, 10:00 AM at the PS Conference Room, Second Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal Street, Paco, Manila.

Interested suppliers/bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the IABAC SECRETARIAT, Procurement Service, Cristobal Street, Paco, Manila. Deadline for submission of Eligibility and Bid Documents will be on **June 13, 2002** at 2:00 PM.

For more information, please call the PS-Purchasing Division at telephone nos. 563-9374 or 563-9402.

The PS reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect therein and may accept the bid which is most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman

(PDI – May 16 & 23, 2002)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, May 22, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	20.5	20.75	20.25	20.75	3,323,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56.5	56.5	56	56	4,446,100
China Banking Corp.	630	630	630	630	1,670
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	36.5	37	36	37	161,500
First E-Bank Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	100,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	39.5	41	39.5	40	92,400
Philippine National Bank	41	42	40.5	40.5	21,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12	12	12	12	9,000
Security Bank Corp.	16	16	15.5	15.5	66,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23	23	22.25	22.25	36,500
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	62,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	200	223	200	223	200
Manulife Financial Corp.	1415	1420	1415	1420	2,940
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	30,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1075	1085	1075	1080	16,960
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31	31	30	30	20,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.57	0.57	2,620,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	655	660	650	660	35,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	1,000,000
Piltel	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	770,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	415	415	400	410	188,790
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	54,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	25	25	24.5	24.75	343,900
Manila Electric Co. B	38.5	38.5	35.5	36	1,376,200
Petron Corp.	1.74	1.78	1.74	1.78	9,614,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	100,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	30,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	331,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.65	2.65	2.55	2.55	283,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	67,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	1,430,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	890,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.08	2.14	2.08	2.12	706,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	6	6	5.9	5.9	8,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	939,300
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	35.5	35.5	34.5	35	715,000
RFM Corp.	1.26	1.3	1.26	1.26	251,000
San Miguel Corp. A	48.5	49	48	49	31,800
San Miguel Corp. B	56	56	55.5	56	204,900
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	160,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	180,000
Ayala Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	1,965,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.38	2.4	2.32	2.34	6,310,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.27	760,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	11,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	40,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.14	220,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.5	0.52	13,900,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	300,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	200,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	6	6	6	6	8,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	170,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	25	25	23.25	23.5	1,052,800
Global Equities Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.125	0.125	1,050,000
Ionics Inc.	7.1	7.1	7	7	20,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	1,220,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	8,500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	2,500,000
Medco Holdings	0.18	0.18	0.13	0.13	220,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	1,220,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	29,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	20,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	1,980,000
Music Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	30,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	200,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Macondray Plastics Inc.	1.66	2.75	1.66	2.75	4,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.6	0.6	70,000
Pryce Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	500,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	15,200
Steniel Manufacturing	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	230,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	2,500,000
Manila Jockey Club	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	67,600
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	490,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	30.5	30.5	29.5	30.5	436,900
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	805	815	805	805	570
Jollibee Warrants	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	226,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,300
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,600
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10	10	10	10	1,500
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	35,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.2	2,311,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	1,200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	1,210,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	460,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	432,000
Highlands Prime Leisure	1.82	1.82	1.78	1.78	120,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	500,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	140,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	178,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	100,000
SM Development Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.89	0.89	260,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	4,092,000
UrbanCorp. Realty Dev. Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	50,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	1,000,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines Inc.	0.041	0.041	0.038	0.04	26,600,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.225	0.21	0.225	2,910,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.235	0.24	0.23	0.24	2,640,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0048	0.005	0.0048	0.0048	21,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0048	0.005	0.0048	0.005	137,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.28	920,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.3	1,800,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0036	0.0034	0.0036	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0032	0.0034	0.0032	0.0032	339,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	24,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	140,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	3,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	8,374,670	355,645,905.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	169,679,560	316,609,685.00
PRO	11,053,000	43,135,310.00
Mining	203,870,000	3,905,400.00
OIL	369,140,000	1,260,800.00
GRAND TOTALS:	762,117,230	720,557,100.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	541.10	DOWN 1.53
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,780.46	DOWN 16.57
PRO	602.21	DOWN 5.37
Mining	1,424.33	UP 59.47
OIL	1.25	UP 0.03
All Shares Index	745.27	UP 3.56
Composite	1,319.58	DOWN 9.12

NO. OF ADVANCES: 21; NO. OF DECLINES: 52; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 48; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 121; NO. OF TRADES: 2,667

CURRENCIES

May 22, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.087548	1.000000	49.4730
Japan	Yen	0.008765	0.008059	0.3987
United Kingdom	Pound	1.587384	1.459600	72.2108
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.139443	0.128218	6.3433
Switzerland	Franc	0.689106	0.633633	31.3477
Canada	Dollar	0.707440	0.650491	32.1817
Singapore	Dollar	0.607738	0.558815	27.6463
Australia	Dollar	0.604194	0.555556	27.4850
Bahrain	Dinar	2.884895	2.652661	131.2351
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.290013	0.266667	13.1928
Brunei	Dollar	0.606383	0.557569	27.5846
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000121	0.000111	0.0055
Thailand	Baht	0.025560	0.023502	1.1627
UAE	Dirham	0.296116	0.272279	13.4705
Korea	Won	0.000878	0.000807	0.0399
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.919500	45.4904
Brazil	Real	0.311618	0.286533	14.1756
Denmark	Kroner	0.438881	0.403551	19.9649
India	Rupee	0.134431	0.123609	6.1153
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.022236	0.020446	1.0115
Mexico	New Peso	0.286197	0.263158	13.0192
New Zealand	Dollar	0.507560	0.466701	23.0891
Norway	Kroner	0.132793	0.122103	6.0408
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018141	0.016681	0.8253
South Africa	Rand	0.108322	0.099602	4.9276
Sweden	Kroner	0.108967	0.100195	4.9569
Syria	Pound	0.024886	0.022883	1.1321
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.031735	0.029180	1.4436
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001090	0.001002	0.0496

Stable prices kept inflation tame in May at 4%–BSP

By Clarissa S. Batino

STABLE food prices and a delayed impact of recent fuel price increases probably kept inflation tame in May to 4 percent or lower, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"I think inflation would stay modest at between 3.6 and 4 percent in May," Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in an interview yesterday.

An analyst with a foreign bank said inflation this month could be higher than the 3.6-percent average from January to April, citing increased consumer spending leading to the resumption of classes.

"We have to watch out for school-related spending like tuition, books and uniforms. Still, the impact would not be significant," he said.

Buenaventura said food prices, which account for the bulk of the consumer price index, remained stable in May.

He added that the impact of a recent increase in pump prices by about 35 centavos per liter would not be felt yet this month.

This year, oil prices have increased by almost P1.30 per liter, including last week's adjustments.

With fuel prices on the rise, transport groups have begun seeking for a fare increase, which may affect the prices of basic commodities.

Buenaventura said despite favorable expectations this month, the country's economic team had yet to firm up its plan to revise its inflation target of 5 to 6 percent for the year.

The Development Budget Coordinating Council earlier planned to revise in April its inflation target to a range of 4.5 to 5.5 percent, but the move was stalled by conflicts in the Middle East that temporarily lifted world crude prices.

The country's economic team is planning next month to revisit its targets, including numbers for imports and exports, inflation, foreign exchange and, possibly, even some fiscal targets.

Export is seen to grow by one to 1.5 percent as opposed to a flat growth in the original target, while interest rates are seen lower from a target of 10 to 11 percent following a substantial decline in the cost of government borrowings.

Buenaventura said earlier that the DBCC feared a protracted crisis in the Middle East over Israel's incursions into Palestine territories could push inflation to 5.5 percent toward the end of the year.

Ayala data center . . .

From page B1

AyalaPort currently has a small, unmanned satellite center in Laguna, which started operations just this month. Javier said the company wanted to go beyond Luzon for its next data center project.

He said the potential investment for the Cebu data center would be less than the amount infused for the one in Makati, but did not give an exact figure as he said it was still being studied.

The Ayala firm recently formed an alliance with business solutions provider SAP Philippines and global hardware manufacturer Hewlett-Packard Co. to offer business solutions under an application service provisioning (ASP) business model.

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Integration needed to boost hog raising industry, says Roxas

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is pushing for the integration and specialization of the hog raising industry, which is currently dominated by backyard operators.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II told members of the National Federation of Hog Farmers to adopt forward and backward linkages to spread the risks and costs of hog raising with both feed millers and wholesale and retail traders.

Mom-and-pop hog raisers account for 80 percent of the total meat sold in the country's markets, he said.

"The hogs are literally the piggy bank of hog raisers. They sell their pigs when they need money for tuition, medicine or to pay for a recruiter's fees for their children to go abroad," Roxas said.

This has forced hog raisers to sell their livestock at 60 percent of their actual market prices.

Roxas said the 40-percent discount was a big opportunity loss to hog raisers considering traders merely moved the produce from the farm gate to retail outlets.

He urged hog raisers to group together and specialize in packaging pre-cut meats to be sold directly to wet markets, groceries and butcher shops.

Roxas cited the experience of the Charoen Pokphand (CP) group of Thailand, which grew from a simple trader of seeds to a fully diversified agro-industrial conglomerate with an annual turnover of $11 billion with operations in 20 countries.

"The CP group's integrated approach in hog and livestock farming increased their productivity. Only through integration or specialization can an industry remain competitive," Roxas said.

The DTI is currently developing a comprehensive program aimed at assisting small and medium enterprises gain more access to financing, market linkages, technology and marketing support.

GOINGS-ON

Insular Life's P488-M profit

INSULAR Life Assurance Co. Ltd. posted a net income of over P488 million last year, or 61 percent more than the previous year's level, despite economic and political difficulties.

Insular Life chair Vicente Ayllon said in a report to policyholders that it was the 91-year-old company's resilience and strong corporate fundamentals that saw it through the "extraordinary circumstances" of 2001.

Insular Life posted consolidated revenues of P8.2 billion in 2001, up 8 percent from 2000, with premiums accounting for P5.7 billion and investment income for P2.2 billion.

The company's total consolidated assets reached P31.1 billion in 2001, up 7 percent from the previous year's P29 billion.

Berkley's Q1 gains

BERKLEY International Plans Inc. announced that its assets increased by 13 percent to P902 million in the first quarter of the year from P801 million in December last year.

Berkley EVP and chief finance officer Daniel L. Villanueva revealed that the growth could be attributed to financial prudence, careful management of investment and effective expense containment.

As of end-March, BIP's investment in trust fund stood at P685 million or 76 percent of the company's total assets. Villanueva said that Berkley, as per policy, immediately puts its earnings in the Trust Fund and similar stable, relatively risk-free and high-yielding investments.

Net income in the first quarter amounted to P7.1 million. Last year, the company posted P30.7 million in net income.

Party at Dos Palmas

DOS PALMAS Resort in Palawan is offering a special package that culminates in a beach party on June 1.

For only P14,998 per person, with a minimum of five persons sharing a room, guests can avail themselves of a four-day/three-night package inclusive of airfare and meals. This rate is valid for bookings during the weekend of May 30 to June 2. Room availability is limited.

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Teresita Fe A. Gregorio
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People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

ISA, BSAG convene confab for governance reforms

THE INSTITUTE for Solidarity in Asia (ISA) and the Business Sector Advisory Group (BSAG), with their co-convenors, the Presidential Committee for Effective Governance (PCEG) and the Governance Advisory Council (GAC) will hold the 5th National Open Conference on Governance Reforms on May 29 at the Makati Shangri-la Hotel.

Themed as "Bringing Ethics and Social Responsibility to Public and Corporate Governance," this conference is the latest in a chain of semestral series convened by ISA that began since 1999. As the theme suggests, the conference will highlight the imperative for high ethical standards and deep social responsibility on the part of every Filipino citizen, for a successful pursuit of good governance and anti-corruption programs. Among its major subthemes are "The Role of the Youth, the Need for Positive Responses from the Sectors and the Professions, and Actions to be Taken for Corporate Governance."

According to conference organizers, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is invited to the conference to announce an interconnected framework for public governance and corporate governance reforms. The President is scheduled to sign two Executive Orders articulating the policy commitment of the government to modern corporate governance practices and to national and local governance reforms.

The conference will also showcase the "governance scorecard initiative" where the PCEG and the GAC are teaming up to win tripartite efforts for improved governance at the national and local government levels. Under their auspices, an initiative has been undertaken towards eventually issuing semester National Governance and Local Governance scorecards to complement the semester Corporate Governance scorecards.

This conference is also being undertaken in cooperation with the Ramon V. del Rosario Sr. AIM Center for Corporate Responsibility. Some 500 participants from the business and civil society sectors, including representatives from the youths that are committed to ethics and social responsibility, shall be attending.

GUEST SPEAKER: HON. JOSE ISIDRO N. CAMACHO
SECRETARY OF FINANCE
HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL, MAKATI CITY
APRIL 01, 2002

TOAP ELECTS 2002 BOARD

The Trust Officers' Association of the Philippines (TOAP), in its first general membership assembly for 2002, elected a new board of directors and officers for the year. The affair was held at the Hotel Intercontinental Ballroom recently. Invited guest speaker and inducting officer was Jose Isidro N. Camacho, Secretary of Finance. Shown (standing, from left) are Roberto S. Vergara (Philtrust), vice president, Ador A. Abrogena (Banco de Oro), director for ways and means, Raul C. Diaz (PBCom), director for membership, Ma. Elena S. Sarmiento (UCPB), president, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro N. Camacho, Ma. Teresa R. Toledo (HSBC), director for special events, lawyer Susan Manalo (BPI), director for legal and regulatory affairs, Rolando D. Esguerra (Equitable PCIBank), treasurer and director for finance, lawyer Federico P. Tancongco (RCBC), secretary, Antonino B. Inumerable (JPMorganChase), director for information and publication.

KRONE MEC
Connecting You to the World

KRONE SIGNS DISTRIBUTORSHIP AGREEMENT

Krone, a world leader in telecommunications and data networks, signs a distributorship agreement with MEC Computer Corp. for Krone's structured cabling solutions for copper and fiber optics and other Krone products. Shown seated (from left) are Larry Cunanan, Krone communications country manager for the Philippines, Eric Behrendt, Krone director and general manager for Asia Pacific region, Merrick Chua, MEC president and Lance Cellona, MEC product manager. Looking on are Jaezel Yadao (left), Krone Premisenet manager and Sheryll Yu, MEC sales manager. Currently, Krone has over 3000 patents and more than 10 billion connections worldwide, attesting to its leadership in the telecommunications industry. Founded in 1928, Krone pioneered in the LSA-Plus 45 degree contact and the crossover leadframe technologies, which led to the emergence of TrueNet revolutionary delivery of zero bit error. MEC, on the other hand, is a leading Philippine distributor of quality IT products such as 3COM hubs and switches, LAN cards and Cisco router.

PMAP 476th meet at Dusit

THE PERSONNEL Management Association of the Philippines will hold its 476th general membership meeting on May 29 12 noon to 2 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom of the Dusit Hotel, Makati City. The meeting will feature a panel discussion that will delve on the status of information and communications technology (ICT) in the Philippines and its impact on the Philippine human capital and will bear the theme humancapital@philippines.com—Are You Logged In?

Invited panelists are Vergilio L. Peña, executive director of the Information Technology and e-commerce Council (Itecc), Dr. Raymund C. Sision, dean of the College of Computer Studies, De La Salle University, and Rosario S. Ventura, PMAP past president and the current Asia regional public affairs manager of Intel Philippines.

On the other hand, the HR Toolbox segment of the program will have Ma. Luz Generoso, AVP of the loans program of the SSS. She will clarify the burning issues of the Revised SSS Guidelines on Salary Loans. The new guideline requires the appointment of a guarantor/co-maker for all salary loans applications of an employee-member. This guarantor/co-maker shall be the present employer of the employee member.

For registration, call the PMAP secretariat at 726-1581, 726-1588, 726-1532, or e-mail pmap@pmap.org.ph.

How to write a book

THE ATV Speakers Network is conducting a program titled "How to Write and Publish Your Book" on Sunday, May 26, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. Topics include why write a book, getting started, deciding on the subject matter, determining readership, gathering materials, writing clearly, drafting, revising and editing the book, financing the project, copyright rules and procedures, and marketing the book. For details, call Ophie, Liezl or Josie at 896-8790 or 899-8441.

BITS Clips

CFS seminars for May

CFS Continental Technology is offering two whole-day seminars this month: "Cutting-Edge Customer Service" (May 25, 2002, 9-5 p.m.) focuses on the correct approach in serving your customers and how it leads to more profits; "Designing Excellent Customer Feedback Forms" (May 30, 2002, 9-5 p.m.) teaches how to design an effective feedback form that works for your company. For more details, call 8697960, 8232358 or 8234825.

Inventor at Sapi convention

DR. JOVITO Y. Deauna, multi-awarded inventor of Aquaclean Water Filtration System and president of the Water Quality Association of the Philippines (WQAP), is one of the speakers in the ongoing National Planning and Convention of the Sanitarians Association of the Philippines (Sapi) in Davao City. The convention started May 21 and ends May 24. Deauna, who is also a member of the advisory council of the Water Quality Association (WQA) International based on Lisle, Illinois, will talk on the different methods of water treatment and purification used in the operation of WRS to make the water conform with the Philippine National Standards for drinking water. Deauna will also enlighten the participants on the objectives and benefits of membership in the WQAP, which is affiliated to the WQA International. WQAP is the only recognized organization of water professionals, water refilling station operators, water treatment and equipment suppliers in the country.

SCOP 17th confab in Baguio

THE SPEECH Communication Organization of the Philippines marks its 17th annual national convention this May 23 to 25 at the Hotel Supreme in Baguio City on the theme "Meeting the Challenges of Global Concerns Through Responsive and Dynamic Speech Communication Education." This undertaking is in cooperation with CHED. To deliver the keynote speech is guest of honor Sonia Malasarte Roco, wife of Secretary Raul Roco, and founder of the Live and Learn Preschool, Ateneo de Manila University. One highlight of the convention is the SCOP Chamber Theater presentation of two literary pieces, and to be directed by new SCOP director Ginnie Sobrino.

Operations analysis seminar

THE UPGRADE Business and Management Center (631-3238, 631-5105, e-mail plrc@compass.com.ph) will conduct a whole-day seminar on Operations Analysis and Capital Budgeting to be held on May 25, Saturday, starting at 8:30 a.m. at the Heritage Hotel Manila, Roxas Boulevard corner Edsa, Pasay City. This seminar is intended for all executives, managers, operations and sales personnel, entrepreneurs and accountants who are responsible for business operations, planning and review. The course outline involves cost concepts and classifications, cost-volume profit analysis, pricing, key concepts in capital budgeting, project evaluation methods, and a guided walk-through of capital budgeting.

Aklanons' 25th anniversary gala

THE ARCHBISHOP Gabriel M. Reyes Memorial Foundation, the oldest existing non-government organization serving Aklan, will mark its 25th anniversary "Binayle" or gala night and dinner dance at the Century Park Hotel in Malate, Manila on May 25. Guest of honor is Aklan Rep. Gabrielle Calizo. VIP guests expected to grace the event are Bishop Gabriel V. Reyes of the Diocese of Kalibo, provincial governor Florencio T. Miraflores, Kalibo mayor Raymar A. Rebaldo, and other prominent personalities. The group is currently chaired by Judge Cesar D. Sta. Maria of the Regional Trial Court of Makati. Proceeds of the event will support the various programs of the Foundation. Interested parties can call Kati delos Reyes at 638-5994 to 97, or Yolly Ureta at 939-0658.

AMA SUPPORTS COMPUTER TRAINING

AMA Education System president Amable C. Aguiluz IX (second from right) donates two sets of personal computers to Mabel Cayco (second from left) of the Social Services and Rehabilitation center to facilitate the computer training program of reformed juvenile offenders from the Molave Ward of the center. The computer training program aims to mold its young beneficiaries to become productive citizens and even industry leaders in the future. Also shown are AMA-HR manager Karen Glodoveza and Molave Ward house parent Evelyn Abujon.

VOICE IMAGE SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

Shown with soprano, professional speaker and voice therapy and rehabilitation specialist Joscephine Gomez (center, front row) are participants of a recent Voice Image seminar/workshop. They include broadcasters Chinggay Andrada, Frances Gloria and Fel Rodolfo, educators Linda David, Helene Cortez and Linda Amon, bankers Josephine Bantigue, Cynthia Garcia and Mita Melencio, businessmen Federico Articona and Donald Geocaniga, homeopathist Winie Elfa and anesthesiologist Wilson Saulon. The unique course will be presented anew at the Manila Galleria Suites from June 10 to 12. For details call The Corporate Mind at 687-7898.

SNACK TIME WITH JACK 'N JILL

Jack 'n Jill brand ambassador Steve Baltao gives away Chippy and Nova snack chips to the members and volunteers of the Kapatiran-Kaunlaran Foundation Inc., an organization dedicated to community development and transformation. This visit is part of Jack 'n Jill's goodwill sampling tour which aims to share Jack N' Jill products with children and volunteers from different orphanages and civic institutions around Metro Manila. 'This is a flagship project of Jack 'n Jill because we think it is important to show these kids that people care about their welfare,' said Baltao.

SPLASH CONCLUDES RAFFLE

Splash Corp.'s personal care group recently held the Robinsons Galleria, Tutuban and Ermita 'Buy a Combo, Doble Panalo' grand raffle draw at Robinsons Supermarket Galleria. Prizes at stake were a living room showcase, scooter and Palm Pilots. Shown (from left) are Byron Ceralde, brand manager for Extract Facial Cleansers, Geiselle Santos, brand manager for Deowhite and Hiyas Papaya Soap, Jojo Eugenio, key account manager, Mario Ypilian, Robinsons Galleria floor manager, Leah Beltran, group product manager, Dennis Ferrer, regional sales manager, and Angie Mulimbayan, promo specialist.

MBA orientation for new grads

A TWO-DAY orientation session on Master of Business Administration studies for new graduates, young professionals or mid-level executives who plan to pursue an MBA degree overseas shall be conducted by International Education Specialists (Inter-Ed) on May 24 and 25 at its office at the 2nd floor Trafalgar Plaza, H.V. de la Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City. The one-on-one interview sessions with applicants shall be handled by Inter-Ed president Roger D. Bartholomew, who shall discuss the MBA curriculum, admission process, financial assistance, student life and foreign culture. The interview sessions shall be undertaken with available materials from the University of Akron, Southern New Hampshire University (United States), Bond University, University of Wollongong (Australia), and University of Birmingham, University of North London and Cardiff University (United Kingdom). For inquiries, call Inter-Ed at 819-1001, 819-1002 and look for Ivy Vidanes, or visit Inter-Ed.

MOTORING

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Ford flexes operations muscle in Southeast Asia

By Tessa R. Salazar

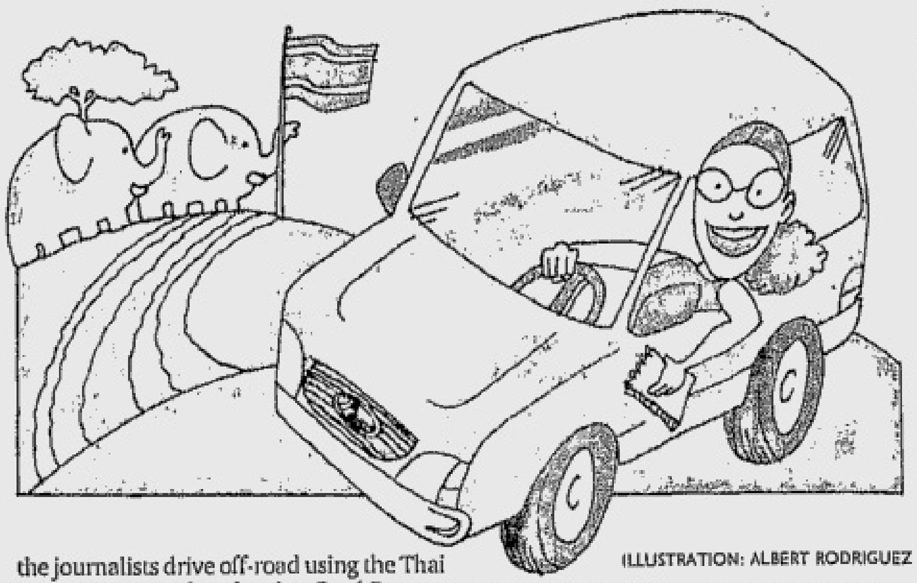
ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

HUA HIN, Thailand—The term conqueror seems apt to the world's second largest automaker Ford Motor Co. nowadays, not just with the way its distinctively large SUVs have hogged the Philippines' narrow streets, but also with the way it has been aggressively position-ing itself in the Asean mar-ket.

And then, this time, Ford has been aggressively wooing the region's most recognizable media outfits in the ongoing Ford media program. Ford has gathered 35 automotive journalists from Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines to the seaside resort of Hua Hin, where the Ford 4x4 No Boundaries Academy is located and the "immersion" exercise is happening, in an apparent flexing of its "automotive muscles" to score a tougher, more prized goal—conquering the entire Asian market.

"Our presence here, while not huge at the moment, is fundamental to our business plans going forward. We are here to grow, to compete, to contribute and to be a part of Asia—all of Asia," said Carolyn Brown, director for Global Affiliates and Associates Public Affairs, Ford Motor Co.

Activities for journalists

The media program started its itinerary in Bangkok and will end in Hanoi, Vietnam. This seven-day getting-to-know-Ford-in-SEA offers lots of interesting Ford-sponsored activities for the journalists and includes the No Boundaries program that lets the journalists drive off-road using the Thai Ford Ranger and Malaysian Ford Ranger Extreme in the No Boundaries 4x4 Academy, a dedicated training facility for customers in Thailand.

We were all given a chance to drive a 1.3-km track that offered various types of terrain—a steep uphill climb (about 30 degrees), a steep drop and plenty of uneven trails. The track is on a hill surrounded by jungle, with elephants intently gazing at the vehicles.

I had to say, though, that the track would still be no match to the trail Ford carved through Mt. Pinatubo. Nevertheless, the elephants seemed to enjoy watching a new "animal" species negotiating what would have been to them a ho-hum trail.

Journalists also had the opportunity to weave through the BIRA circuit on the new Laser Tierra—known to the Philippines as the Lynx—and the Explorer and the Escape (to be introduced to the Philippine, Indonesia and Thailand markets on the third quarter of the year).

Asean operations

We also got a glimpse of the Auto Alliance Thailand assembly plant at the Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate in Rayong, where Ford Ranger and Mazda Fighter pickup trucks are assembled. Ford Motor Co. stressed that its $500-million Ford-Mazda joint venture is recognized as the second largest vehicle exporter in Thailand, with the trucks being exported to over 130 markets worldwide.

Brown stressed that Ford Motor Co. is pleased with its operations in the Asean region.

John Parker, president of Ford Asean operations, told the press that it had been more than five years since Ford Motor Co. opened its regional office in Bangkok and established its automotive presence in the region.

"We have been quite busy opening world-class manufacturing facilities, providing high-value jobs to local citizens and delivering customer-focused Ford Motor Co. products and services to consumers throughout the region," he said.

Second leg

We're now off to the second leg of our trip—the bustling city of Hanoi—the head office of Ford Vietnam operations. We're scheduled to visit the Ford Hai Duong Plant where the Ford Ranger, Laser, Escape and Transit are being made.

The group is also scheduled to interact with schoolchildren in the Ford Safety Village, a playground teaching traffic safety to Vietnamese kids 6 to 12 years old. The Safety Village aims to educate schoolchildren about the importance of road safety and generate a new breed of safety-conscious citizens. Perhaps, that would be a good idea for our Filipino kids, too. Wise old elephants couldn't agree more.

Motolite introduces new truck battery

MOTOLITE recently introduced this month the new Motolite TruckMaster, adding a new member to its growing Motolite family.

Motolite TruckMaster is the answer to the growing clamor for a low-price, high-quality automotive battery for trucks, buses, jeepneys and other heavy-duty vehicles.

According to Oriental and Motolite Marketing Corp. president Miguel V. Pingol, Motolite TruckMaster offers the best value proposition, particularly to the commercial vehicle segment, as it combines both reliability and dependability with an affordable price.

Motolite conducted aggressive research and development efforts that resulted to the high quality reflected on Motolite TruckMaster's features. The heavy-duty design encased in a rigid polypropylene container is constructed with thick plates, enabling it with a high capacity and strong resistance to heat and corrosion. The compact paste formulation provides high paste density and great allowance against even the heaviest engine demand. Hydroset curing through the tried and tested Culmat plate processing technology gives long power retention. Lead conductive material in the TruckMaster's straps and posts provide great power delivery efficiency. The TruckMaster also has ample sediment space volume to prevent early cell short circuits.

Said OMMC brand manager Marie Gay P. Opinion: "Motolite TruckMaster has a 12-month warranty. This is our way of providing assurance to our customers on the durability of Motolite TruckMaster."

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2002 318iA, silver on gray fabric. A pampered demonstrator for just 1.9M.

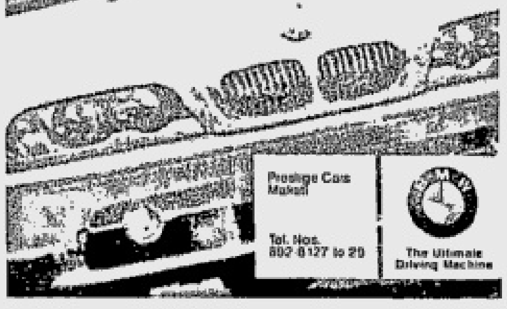
2002 316i, silver on black fabric. The very latest 3 Series for 1.42M.

2001 325iA, green on black leather. Effortless speed, joy on wheels. 1.95M.

2001 318iA, black on black leather. 16" wheels w/very low miles. 1.65M.

2001 318iA, gray on black fabric. Dec. 2001 registration, flawless. 1.6M.

2001 320d, silver on black fabric. A solid 3 Series w/diesel economy. 1.85M.



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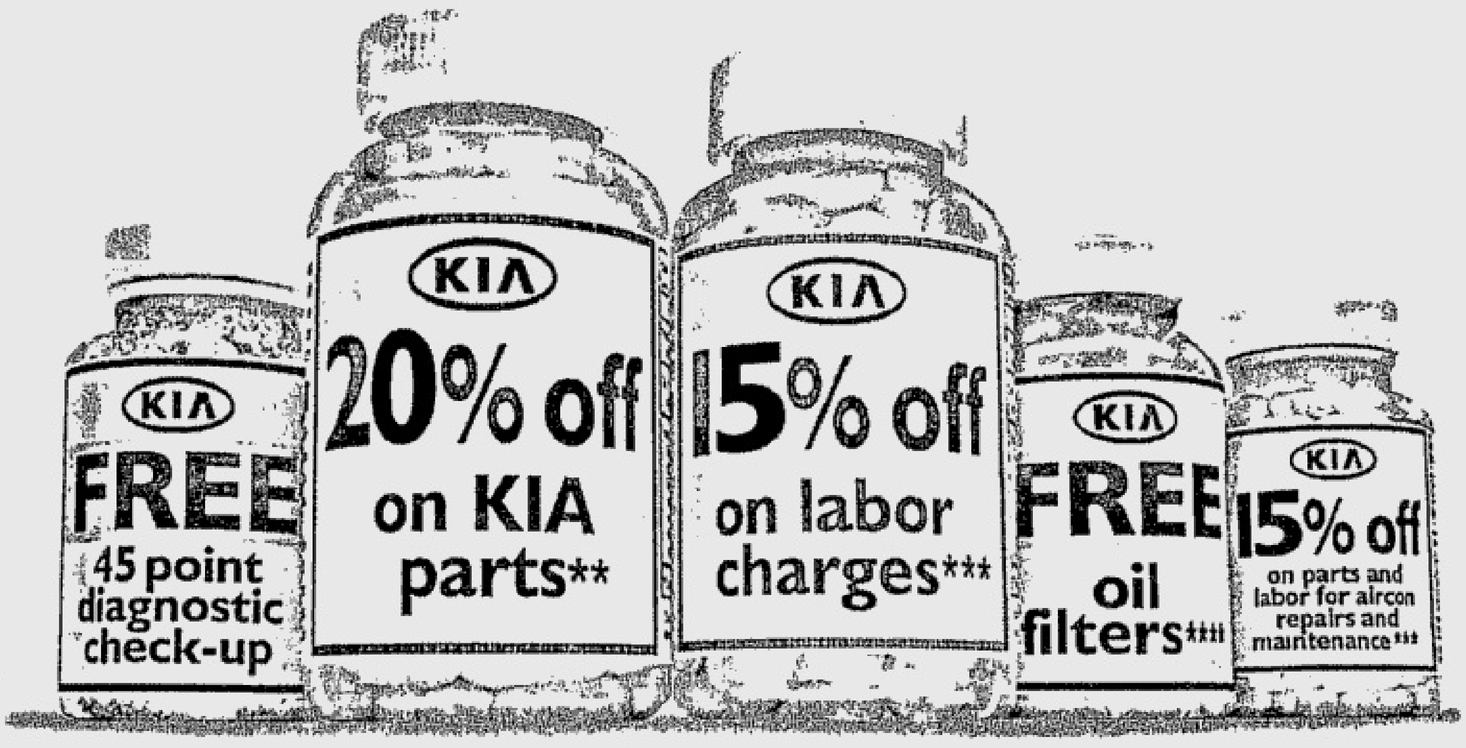
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Parts Description	SRP	PROMO	Savings
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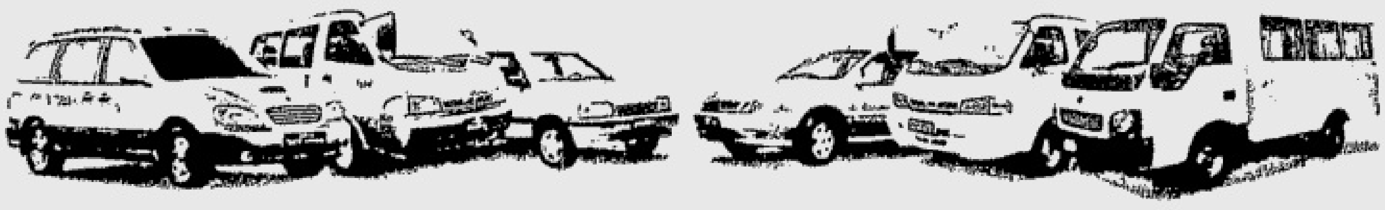
Pregio	604.79	423.35	181.44
KC2700	604.79	423.35	181.44
2. AIR FILTER			
Carnival/Sedona	P 670.97	P 469.28	P 201.69
Pregio	707.49	494.95	212.54
KC2700	616.20	430.76	185.44
3. FUEL FILTER			
Carnival/Sedona	P 976.78	P 781.42	P 195.36
Pregio	647.00	517.60	129.40
KC2700	647.00	517.60	129.40

•Prices reflected are applicable to cash payments only.

The KIA SERVICE Clinic starts May 20 to June 20, 2002 at the selected dealers shown below.



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Per DTI NCR Permit No.1984, Series of 2002

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KIA COMMONWEALTH
(PRINCE MOTOR CORP.)
43 Commonwealth Avenue, Q. C.
Tels. 951-2201 to 16•453-9318 to 20

KIA BALINTAWAK
(SIGNET BALINTAWAK)
1240 EDSA Balintawak, Q. C.
Tels. 362-5091/92•362 5095

KIA MANDALUYONG
(SIGNET MANDALUYONG)
79 EDSA Mandaluyong, M. M.
Tels. 531 4631 to 33•631-4424•631-1949

KIA NEW MANILA (WHEELS, INC.)
222 E. Rodriguez St. Ave., Q. C.
(near St. Luke's Hospital)
Tels. 721-8456•721-8465•721-8448•4113406

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KIA PAMPANGA
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Gapan-Olongapo Road, San Fernando, Pampanga
Tels. (045) 961-1485•(045) 961-3926•961-1486
Cell No. (0912) 330-3231

KIA BATANGAS-LAGUNA
(BATANGAS-LAGUNA AUTOCENTER, INC.)
Main: Pres. Laurel Highway Crossing, Sto. Tomas Batangas
Tels. (043) 778-4214 to 17

KIA CAVITE (KIA MOTORS CAVITE)
Aguinaldo Highway, Bacoor, Cavite
Tels. (049) 411-5650• 520-8242 KIA Biñan:
Aruza Bldg. 2 National Highway, Bgy. Canlalay, Biñan, Laguna (Beside Golden City Subd.)
Tels. (02) 520-8241•(049) 411-0139

Ford Philippines improves website

By Charles E. Buban

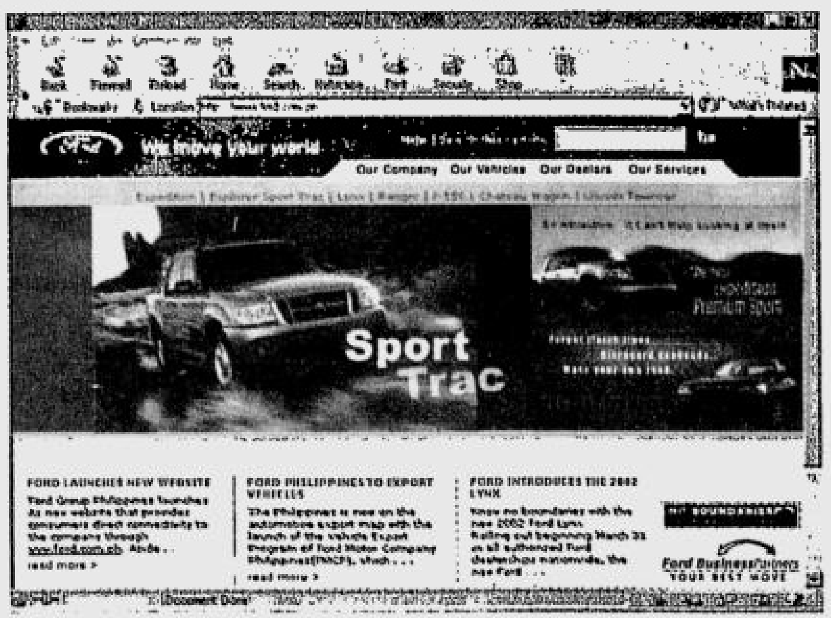
FORD Group Philippines' website has a new look.

For those who have been using the www.ford.com.ph address, the change will be a dramatic departure from the usual and is now more focused on functionality while enhancing consumer participation. The website offers easier navigation and valuable resources like product and dealer information which are readily accessible.

"Like all our vehicle products which are built to serve the growing demands and varying lifestyles of today's consumers, this website is designed to take care of the needs of our most valued assets, our customers," says Henry Co, president of FGP.

The website allows customers to have a quick look at Ford's latest products, exact directions to the nearest dealerships and even ideas on how to get the best deals on a brand-new SUV or pickup truck.

"We wanted to create a website that our consumers can easily relate to. Customer satisfaction has always been our top priority and this is what we have in mind when we built this improved website," says Dave Macasadia, VP for sales and marketing of Ford Group Philippines.



THE NEW look of Ford Philippines' website

Wide array of Ford products

Customers can check out the wide array of Ford products available in the Philippines—from the best-selling Expedition to the newly introduced 2002 Lynx sedan. Get a glimpse of these cars and trucks with upcoming features that provide a 360-degree view of the interior. Guests can also check how their favorite Ford vehicles look in their preferred color.

The website has a complete listing of all its 11 dealerships nationwide. There's an online location map that include complete details as to how to get there. Customers can also avail of dealer services through the request forms available at the website. They can also schedule a visit to the showroom and a test drive, or follow up on vehicle deliveries and registration status. Even requests for plant visits can also be arranged.

Payment terms

Another new addition to the website is the financial calculator that provides interested customers estimates on monthly payments based on personal inputs on payment terms and down payment amount.

"The financial calculator can assist an interested Ford buyer in making their purchase decision. This is our special way of making Filipinos more welcome to the Ford family by offering them a wealth of information about our vehicles and services," adds Macasadia.

In addition to the valuable resources, the site also offers its guests a communication link to Ford Group Philippines through comment forms. This feature will ensure that the customers' opinions and suggestions will reach Ford's qualified experts.

During the website's formal launch at Ford Quezon Avenue, Macasadia also says this improved website is another testimony from Ford that it knows no boundaries when it comes to offering customers the very best.

Sign of the times; NEX traffic system sucks

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

WHAT goes up must come down. That's a line from a song popularized by a band in the Sixties. The band's name? I have forgotten, though. The Credence Clearwater Revival? If yes, that band was not a one-hit wonder. But I have doubts. Maybe, I'm wrong. (Vernon B. Sarne should be quick to the rescue here.)

Whatever, I cite that line in lieu of a recent report that vehicle sales upped by 5.9 percent in the first four months of the year.

Does that mean the slump is over insofar as progress in the automotive industry is concerned?

I really hope so. Carmakers have suffered that much. Enough is enough. About time they started reaping the rewards of a big rebound.

* * *

For the record, vehicle sales between January and April climbed to 24,496 units from 23,134 a year earlier. A robust development, indeed.

The month of April alone (Erap's birthmonth) netted assemblers a total of 6,511 units sold, up 27 percent from the same month a year ago.

April went on to post a staggering 44 percent increase in sales of commercial vehicles, registering 4,984 units sold compared to 3,471 during the same month in 2001.

Sales in passenger cars also increased from January to April, up by 2.2 percent to 7,224 units. In that same period, commercial vehicles accounted for 70 percent of total sales.

* * *

What could be the reason/s for the rebound?

New models (Nissan Serena QRV, the revitalized Isuzu Trooper/Crosswind XUV, the souped-up Mitsubishi Adventure, the Venture and that best-selling Toyota Altis) and some creativity (the latest Honda CR-V, for one) make up the core of the reasons for the turnaround.

But Ariel de Jesus, spokesperson for Toyota Motor Philippines, cited the low interest rates as a major factor.

Said Ariel: "This helped restore the confidence of buyers."

He also said the "aggressive promotion" initiated by the major players "helped excite" the market.

"If the improved sales is sustained," said Ariel, "we are really headed for a turnaround."

* * *

Toyota, as usual, took the lead both in the passenger car and CV category. It sold 7,447 vehicles. In the car segment, the Corolla Altis (Brad Pitt's babe) was the best seller (2,598 units). Toyota's Revo sold 3,853 units in the first four months.

But Froilan Dytianquin of Mitsubishi was quoted by our Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. as saying "the positive sales data did not reflect the true state of the industry," shocking some quarters from the motoring world. He said Mitsubishi, whose 21 percent market share (5,100 units sold) makes it the country's second largest assembler, has maintained its projection of flat sales growth this year.

Said Dytianquin: "The 6-percent growth in sales was not something to crow about, considering the industry was coming from a low base last year when the industry was hit by labor strikes and assemblers were in a depletion mode as they clear up more inventory room for new models."

Uh-oh.

* * *

Car buffs are eternally fascinated with what rolls out from the assembly lines. This country teems with people bereft of dreams but always awash with cash when it comes to fulfilling dreams—as in buying either that dream car or a new model. The garage will always provide room for a new one.

Never mind those used vehicles being sold indiscriminately in the Subic area. Of course, they ate up quite a chunk of the market. In the end, though, the more discriminating always end up yearning for quality. And quality can only be found in new ones, not in secondhand vehicles, imported or otherwise.

Of course, it will help if the government decides to put an end to the importation of used vehicles.

But then, this is a free country, where free competition is allowed because we are a democracy.

* * *

What do the world's safest car and the coolest caffeine buzz have in common?

They both pine for excellence. Such a paradigm of quality may come in the form of a coffee drink or a safe and smooth ride. But together, they make the best combination for a perfect afternoon.

Volvo teams up with Seattle's Best to bring out the best in car and coffee in the Volvo Coffee Blow-out tomorrow, May 24, at Seattle's Best, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, and on May 31 at Seattle's Best Eastwood City, Libis. On both days, coffee lovers get to nurse their cups of brew together with car enthusiasts who get to enjoy the beauty, function and practicality of Volvo's sedan for all seasons and reasons, the All-Wheel-Drive S60.

Volvo S60 thus welcomes you with free coffee from 4 p.m. onward on May 24 and May 31.

* * *

Why can't those traffic jams that seem like eternity near the North Expressway's San Fernando exit going to SM in Pampanga be licked?

The highway enforcers there have their system of directing traffic in that area but, sadly, the system sucks.

For example, why do they keep on arresting drivers using the unpaved left portion of the highway in their bid to wiggle out of the mess?

In the first place, most of those using the dirt road drive vehicles that are built for such conditions. They are usually the pickups, AUVs or 4x4s. They are sturdy enough to withstand sand and gravel roads.

Now if cars also want to traverse the dirt road to avoid traffic jams, why not let them? It's their car anyway, not yours.

Any word on this from the dashing Luis Sison, top honcho of NEX (North Expressway)?

* * *

***QUOTE ME.* Expressway signs are being disobeyed with impunity because nobody seems to have the political will to enforce them.**

4 years of RAV

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

HOW time flies! It seems like only last year that I bought a first generation Toyota RAV4. But in reality my cute ute is pushing five, having been four years under my care and ownership as of Aug. 12, 2001.

When you've owned and driven a car for more than four years, the experience should qualify you to submit what car 'zines call a "Long-Term Test" report. But before I inflict one such on you, here's a little history.

The Toyota RAV4 was the second compact sport utility vehicle introduced on the Philippine car market, the first being the Daihatsu Feroza. From the start, all RAV4 units sold here were CBU (completely built up). I first laid eyes on the RAV4 in Tokyo in October 1992, when a 3-door model was being exhibited as a concept car at Amlux, Toyota's auto salon. I immediately loved the impudent-looking little SUV, never dreaming that I would have the good luck of owning one five years later.

This good luck came in the form of a low-interest car loan from my employer and a special promo on the 3-door RAV4 offered by Toyota dealers around June-July 1997. At that time, the full impact of the brewing Asian financial crisis had not yet hit the country. Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. was about to launch the 5-door RAV4, so they held a clearance sale and slashed P100,000 off the SRP (Suggested Retail Price) of the 3-door model, bringing it down to P660,000.

Since I intended to use the RAV4 for rough weather driving, which in Manila means fording flooded streets, I chose a manual transmission, full-time 4-wheel-drive unit. On my way home from work a week later, my new mini-SUV was put to the test when an unheralded typhoon suddenly placed almost all of Metro Manila underwater. My RAV4 took it all in stride, however, never faltering or stalling even when it had to ford choppy, waist-high flood waters on Sucat Road in front of the Duty Free complex. The RAV4's unitized body construction is so tight that not one drop of flood water seeped into the passenger cabin.

Through the years, my RAV4 has manifested its reliability in other, less dramatic ways. Its mechanical and electrical systems never gave me a problem. Its 2.0-liter twin cam 16-valve 4-cylinder engine never failed me, except one morning when it wouldn't start because the two-year-old battery was dead and needed to be replaced. The engine has never overheated, stalled or died on the road. (Of course, I faithfully follow the manufacturer's maintenance and check-up schedule.)

What I like best about my RAV4 is its nimbleness that makes it fun to drive. Although a warning bell sounds off when you go past 120 kilometers per hour, you may ignore the bell and step on the gas and the RAV4's frisky powerplant will respond accordingly. While my RAV4's engine does not have variable valve timing and packs 20 horses less than the new 2001 RAV4, its body is shorter and much lighter than the new one so it is quicker and more agile. These factors often more than compensate for the absence of VVT-i and less horsepower. At high speeds on the tollway, my RAV4 goes as straight and as steady as a Camry. Its smaller dimensions also make my RAV4 easy to squeeze into ultra-tight parking spaces.

Other things I like about the 1997 model, first-generation 3-door RAV4: the wide-band black body cladding that resists dents from rocks, doors and shopping carts; the short-throw stick shift; the tall, wide 16-inch tires and snazzy five-spoke alloy wheels; rear seats that can be easily folded down to increase cargo space; the high seating position providing the driver 82 degrees of frontal visibility; the double wishbone independent front and rear suspension contributing to sure-footed handling and riding comfort; the swing-out rear door's wide cargo opening; and the broad, squat body stance and styling that project a tough, muscular and adventuresome aura.

What I don't like: the wide "B" pillar that obstructs the driver's view to the rear right side; the notchy gear shift and the noise the engine makes at high speeds.

But as you can see, the "likes" greatly outnumber the "don't likes." In two months, my RAV4 will be five years old. In so many years, it may become a collector's item like the original (1955) Ford Thunderbird. I'm not in the habit of keeping cars that are four years old or older, but I think I'll hang on to this one for giving me so much driving fun and enjoyment.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A fool and his money are a girl's best friend.

* * *

E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.

CAR SHOW

Outback Restaurant Alabang recently gathered Honda car owners in its spacious parking lot at the Alabang Town Center. "Mr. Pogi Car of the Night" went to the Honda Civic Esi of Jojo Eustaquio (middle).

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A car with 2 engines? Why not

By Charles E. Buban

AS THE WORLD awaits the coming of the hydrogen revolution, there is a continuous pressure for the auto industry to produce cleaner and more fuel-efficient vehicles right now. Hydrogen is the preeminent energy source of the new millennium.

The quest has led the auto industry to develop hybrid cars that run on a combination of gasoline and electricity. Hybrid cars combine the technical advantages of the electric cars with the economical advantages of conventional ones. The result is an affordable, low-emission, fuel-efficient vehicle with performance standards equal to or better than many conventional vehicles.

One type of hybrid technology with the most potential to reshape the auto industry in the years ahead could be this car being developed by CMC Power Systems Ltd. of Australia. It will employ two engines—one will power the car's new 42-volt electrical systems while the other will be dedicated only to drive the wheels.

This is a significant change in how cars are designed but the principle of a dedicated electric power generation unit is nothing new. The technology is similar to the one used in aerospace industry wherein a separate engine unit generates electricity independently of the main engine. This brings about greater overall efficiency since the car can operate at its optimum speed.

International collaboration

In partnership with California-based Aria-Group, the CMC developed a so-called automotive auxiliary power unit (APU), which is a system that incorporates high efficiency, lightweight, low vibration, compact engine and generator set that will provide for all the electrical requirements of the vehicle.

The proposed 500cc APU is capable of delivering up to 10kW of power which should be powerful enough to allow the car to be shut off when it is stationary in order to save fuel and emissions, according to the CMC.

The APU will offer an electrical power generation solution that is able to operate independently of the main vehicle engine and the net result is inherently far more efficient and effective despite having "two engines" operating inside the car.

The APU will be fitted into a 42-volt electrical system, perceived by the industry as the next system to replace the current 12 volts used in vehicles today.

The 42-volt system will solve the high electricity requirement of next generation vehicles. With a higher-powered electrical system, the next generation cars will enable to acquire technologies such as electric brakes, electric steering, active suspensions, electrically actuated valves, on-board "intelligent-vehicle" safety systems and entertainment modules.

In the late '50s, a similar transition transpired when automakers switched from a 6-volt to a 12-volt electrical system when electrical equipment inside vehicles started to increase.

Efficient solution

Today's vehicle engines use 20-25 percent of their energy just to power auxiliaries such as air-conditioning, water pump, battery recharging, lighting and energy-draining high-tech, high-performance electronic safety systems. With the APU developed by the CMC, these functions will be stripped off from the motive power (main) engine's load, thus removing the generator, starter motor, belt drives, pulleys and associated supports.

The engine can now be made smaller and simpler. As the APU will operate at optimum revs, the CMC says the main engine will continue to operate up and down the rev range as the car speeds and slows.

The CMC is now applying for a patent covering the use of its engine as an APU and believes this will give the company a leading edge in the race for a better hybrid car.

Suzuki offers 3 motorcycle models

SUZUKI offers not just one but three choices of motorcycles on which to mount a sidecar for reliable tricycle service. Any of the three choices will ensure that whether the tricycle is for family or commercial use, it remains trouble-free and reliable for any terrain and under any road condition for a long time.

Comfortable with their equally easy maneuverability, Suzuki X-4 GP125; X-3 GP100 and X-120 B120 have a sporty, good-looking appearance and their beauty goes inside out. The X-4 boasts a modern new decal while the X-3 sports an exciting new decal. The X-20 has a sporty new decal.

The X-3 and X-4 have German technology rubberized signal lights and forged-type front and pivotal axles. Both models also have welded rear signal lamp bracket. Their contoured dual seats ensure a comfortable ride for both driver and passenger. All three models have heavy-duty rear carriers. They all have Suzuki's exclusive capacitor discharge ignition (CDI).

Dollar continues to slide against yen

TOKYO—The dollar fell to its lowest level against the yen in over five months Wednesday as confidence in the Japanese economy grew and local stocks continued to rise despite a decline on Wall Street, dealers said.

But fear of market intervention by Japanese authorities to halt a sharp rise in the yen—which has risen around 3 percent against the dollar in the past week—offered some support to the US unit.

The greenback traded at 123.79 yen at 12:35 a.m. (0335 GMT) off a low of 123.50—its weakest point since the start of December. It was quoted at 124.13-16 yen in New York and 125.62-65 yen in Tokyo late Tuesday.

"Last week the movement was dollar depreciation but now it's yen appreciation," said Koji Fukaya, chief foreign exchange analyst for Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi.

"Foreign speculators began, last week, selling the dollar against the yen, especially supported by the stock market appreciation and foreign investors buying Japanese stocks," Fukaya said.

The rise in Japanese stocks was again the main factor Wednesday, he added, despite concerns that the yen's rise would hurt the earnings of Japanese exporters.

Share prices advanced 0.9 percent in the morning session with the Nikkei-225 average of the Tokyo Stock Exchange up 106.59 points to 11,907.75.

"Technically, 123 yen is supported but the demand and supply situation is bad so it could be broken. The 121-122 yen mark is considered the level that the authorities will intervene in the market," said Fukaya.

Finance Minister Masajuro Shiokawa said earlier that the ministry must wait until it can judge whether the dollar-yen rate would stabilize before deciding to step into the foreign exchange market. **AFP**

FED OFFICIAL SAYS

US economy in turnaround

WASHINGTON—The US economy is in a "turnaround," but questions remain over the strength of its recovery, Federal Reserve Vice Chair Roger Ferguson said on Tuesday.

Ferguson made the statement after advising regional bankers to use more up-to-date risk management tools as their businesses prosper.

"It does appear that a turnaround is under way and the question obviously is how robust it is going to be for the rest of this year," Ferguson said in answer to a question after speaking to the North Carolina Bankers Association in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia.

Banks, he said, must keep pace with market changes.

"New systems and procedures may be needed to keep pace with the more-complex risks associated with an evolving or growing business," he said in his prepared remarks.

Echoing the uncertainties voiced by Fed policymakers in a statement issued after their last scheduled meeting in early May, at which the Fed left borrowing costs untouched, Ferguson said the economy faces two questions.

"One is when will businesses decide it is time to return to more robust investment profiles? The second is . . . will consumers, that have been in many ways the mainstay of the economy over the last year or so, continue to hold on to that role?" he said.

Policymakers are next scheduled to gather for an interest rate-setting meeting on June 25 and 26.

Banks healthy

Ferguson's comments on Tuesday came after Fed Governor Mark Olson told another banking group that the nation's banks are indeed healthy, but risks to the banking system may emerge even as the United States pulls out of its first recession in a decade.

"We have just concluded more than 10 years of economic prosperity, followed by slightly more than one year of recession—a recession that is now behind us," Olson told the Maryland Bankers Association's convention in Palm Beach, Florida.

"At this point in the economic cycle, whatever weaknesses have crept into our risk-management systems are most likely to come to light," he said.

The US economy steamed ahead in the first quarter, with gross domestic product growing a hefty 5.8 percent. **Reuters**

IMF approves 1-yr debt relief for Argentina

WASHINGTON—The International Monetary Fund remains fully committed to helping Argentina recover from its financial crisis and will give the country an additional year to repay a $136-million loan coming due this week, the head of the agency said.

IMF managing director Horst Koehler made the announcement late Tuesday after a meeting with Economy Minister Roberto Lavagna, who arrived in Washington for two days of talks with officials at the IMF and the administration of US President George W. Bush.

"Minister Lavagna's visit provided a welcome opportunity to review the efforts of his new economic team and the central bank to develop a comprehensive program that would address the deteriorating economic situation faced by Argentina," Koehler said in a brief statement.

Argentina is hoping that the IMF soon will agree to begin negotiating up to $9 billion in new loans to help stabilize an economy hit by the biggest government debt default in history, a botched devaluation of the peso and a serious banking crisis.

Koehler did not announce that the agency was ready to begin negotiations for new loans. He said, however, that as a "demonstration of the fund's support" the agency's 24-member executive board voted Tuesday to give Argentina another year to make a $136-million repayment on previous loans. The repayment would have come due Wednesday.

"The IMF remains fully committed to doing all that it can to help Argentina put together the strong program needed to stabilize its economy and lay the foundations for a return to sustained growth," Koehler said.

"The task is imposing, but it can be accomplished, through decisive action by the government, supported by the Argentine people," Koehler said. **AP**

PNOC unit disputes award of ₱600-M drilling project

From page B1

that PNOC-EDC:

- Owns and operates nine rigs and has been in the drilling business since 1974;
- As a member of the International Association of Drilling Contractors, can undertake even the most aggressive and complex project anywhere in the world;
- Has drilled and worked on 765 wells, some of which reached a depth of about 18,000 feet—considerably deeper than PGI's planned 13,000-ft wells; and
- Has drilled 176 wells in the Tiwi and Mak-Ban geothermal fields at a range of $1.5 million to $2 million per well as against PGI's $4 million per well.

On Monday, PGI announced it was set to start next month a $12-million program to maximize the performance of its project in the Makiling-Banahaw (Mak-Ban) geothermal field.

PGI vice president Jens Pedersen said in a news briefing the program concurred with National Power Corp.'s two-year rehabilitation efforts for Tiwi and Mak-Ban.

"The project will involve the drilling of three wells at a depth of 13,000 feet," Pedersen said. "The existing ones are only between 8,000 and 9,000 ft."

The PGI executive said the rehabilitation and the drilling projects combined would enhance the generating capacity of Mak-Ban from 250 mw to 402 mw.

Pedersen added that PGI and Napocor were financing the project at 45-55 percent sharing.

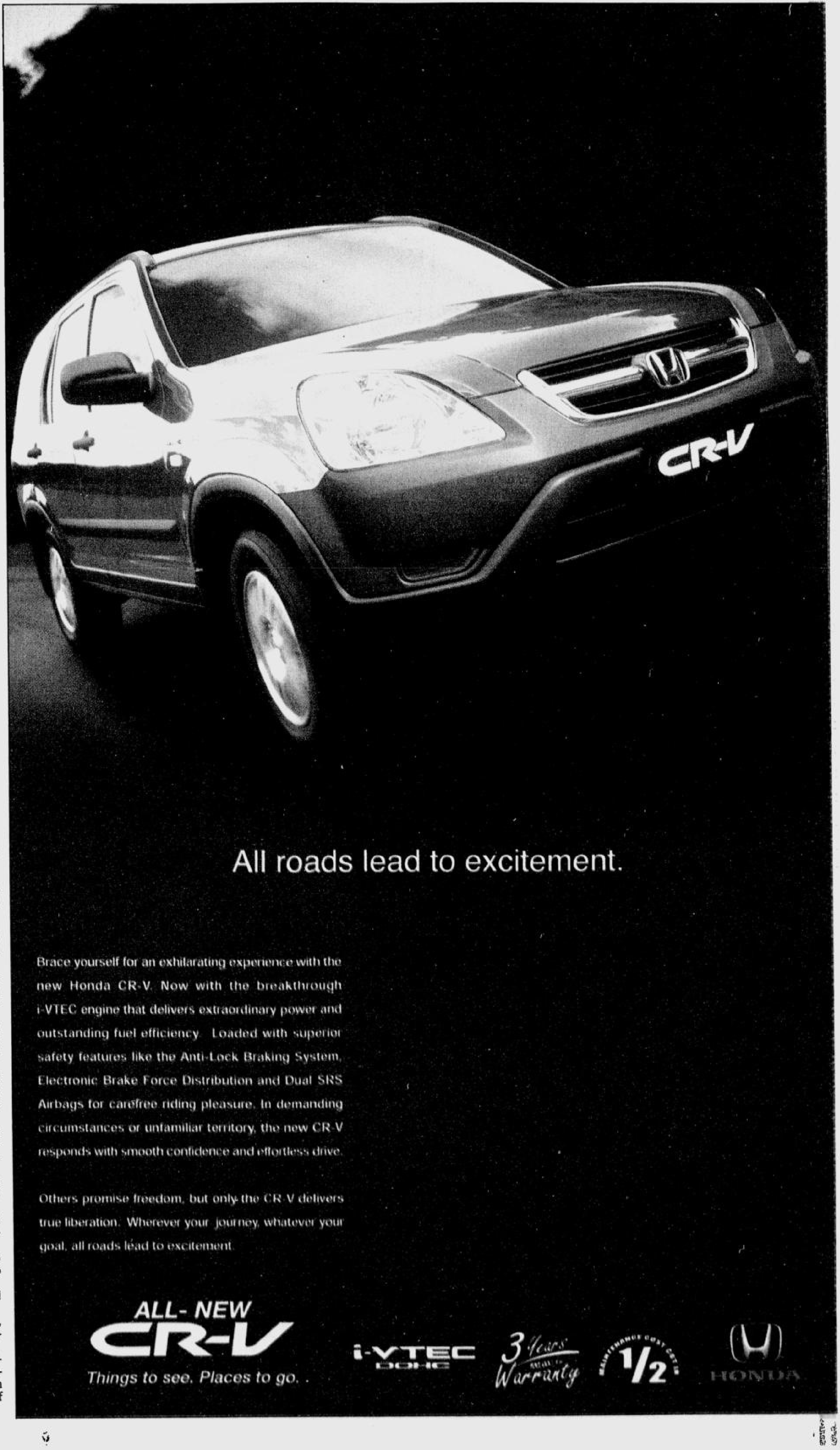
PGI is the operator of the Napocor-owned geothermal plants in Tiwi, Albay, and Mak-Ban in Laguna and Quezon.

The two geothermal complexes worth $475 million have a combined installed capacity of 756 mw, but is currently running at only 350 mw.

"After rehabilitation, Mak-Ban would still be running even after 40 years," he said.

PGI, a subsidiary of US-based Unocal Corp., pioneered geothermal exploration and development in the country in 1971.

Unocal is one of the world's biggest independent petroleum exploration and production companies. Its major investments are in Asia, Latin America and the US-Gulf of Mexico region.



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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR NFA SUGAR BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting sealed Sale Through Market Determined Pricing (SMDP) among all interested buyers at NFA Central Office, Boardroom, 10/F, 101 Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City, for the sale of local and imported refined sugar, particulars as follows:

WITHDRAWAL PERIOD	:	VOLUME (in Lkg.)
JUNE	:	125,000 Lkg.
JULY	:	125,000 Lkg.
AUGUST	:	125,000 Lkg.
SEPTEMBER	:	125,000 Lkg.
COLOR (ICUMSA Units) max	:	45 (Imported) 100 (Local)
INDICATIVE PRICE	:	P1,200 per Lkg.
BID BOND	:	5% of the total price offer
PERFORMANCE BOND	:	10% of the bid price in the form manager's/cashier's check or thru irrevocable Letter of Credit
AUCTION DATES	:	31 May 2002 (5 June 2002 in case of failure or for any balance of the first auction) 2:00 PM

Bid documents will be available on 30 May 2002 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00. The same terms and conditions set during the last May 9 and 15, 2002 SMDP shall still be used, copies of which can be secured starting 30 May 2002 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Directorate for Marketing Operations (Operations and Coordinations Division), 5th Floor, Matimyas Bldg., E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City or may contact at Telephone No. 712-1572.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all, waive any informality thereof and accept only such bids as are advantageous to the agency.

(Sgd.) **ANTHONY R.A. ABAD**
Administrator

(PDI--May 23 & 29, 2002)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PNPC COMPLEX, MERRITT ROAD, FORT BONIFACIO, MAKATI CITY
Tel. No. 893-1320 loc. 5279

INVITATION FOR BIDS

1. PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) has received an ODA loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as JBIC), in the amount of 14,460,000,000.00 Yen towards the cost of the Northern Negros Geothermal Power Projects and intends to apply the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for the **SUPPLY AND DELIVERY** of 57,500 Bags - Oilwell Class "G" Cement (FGK 10667). Disbursement of an ODA Loan by JBIC will be subject, in all respects, to the terms and conditions of the Loan Agreement, including the disbursement procedures and the "Guidelines for Procurement under JBIC ODA Loans". No party other than PNOC-EDC shall derive any rights from the Loan Agreement or have any claim to loan proceeds. The above Loan Agreement will cover only a part of the project cost. As for the remaining portion, PNOC-EDC will take appropriate measures for finance.
2. JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as PNOC-EDC, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC,
   a) will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
   b) will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded by JBIC ODA Loans if it at any times determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practice in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.
3. PNOC-EDC now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders from eligible source countries for the supply of the Goods for the purpose of the Project.
4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information on the bid form and inspect the bidding documents at the office of Purchasing Division c/o **Mr. Luis Alejandro L. Joson**, PNOC-Energy Development Corporation, PNPC Complex, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1201 Makati City. Tel. No. (632) 893-1320 Loc. 5279, Fax No. (632) 840-1834.
5. A complete set of bidding documents may be secured by any interested eligible bidder starting May 13, 2002, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of one hundred pesos (PHP100.00) Philippine Currency.
6. For purposes of clarifying matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on June 3, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. at the above address.
7. The estimated date of award is on July 30, 2002.
8. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the amount indicated in the tender documents, and in the form acceptable to PNOC-EDC. The bids must be delivered to the above address on or before 2:00 P.M. of June 27, 2002. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. Late bids shall not be accepted.
9. PNOC-EDC will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of bids.
10. PNOC-EDC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground for PNOC-EDC's action.

(Sgd.) Sergio Antonio F. Apostol
Chairman/President/C.E.O.

(PDI--May 23, 2002)

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NOVENA TO THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND SAINT JUDE

May the most Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, blessed, loved, adored and glorified throughout the whole world now and forever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

Say nine times a day for nine days. Prayer will be answered by the eighth day, it has never failed.

Thank you very much, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude, for favor granted.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 48, MANILA

IN THE MATTER OF THE:
ADOPTION OF THE CHILD
HANZ CHRISTIAN DELA ROSA

SPEC. PROC. NO. 01-102039

MANUEL A. PARSARIO and
ROSA MARIA R. DELA ROSA,
Petitioners
x-----------------------------------x

ORDER

In a verified Petition dated 8 October 2001, the above-named spouses-petitioners pray that after due notice, publication and hearing, the minor, Hanz Christian Dela Rosa, be declared as their legally adopted child.

It is alleged in the petition that petitioners has all the qualification and none of the disqualification provided by law to adopt the minor, Hanz Christian Dela Rosa, considering the said child is very close relative by consanguinity within the third civil degree of the petitioner Manuel and Rosa Maria Parsario, and the petitioners financial, economic, physical, moral, spiritual, and other assets to support, rear, care and educate the children is more than enough, sufficient, secured to be utilized for the benefit of the said child. The said minor is the illegitimate child of Racquel D. Dela Rosa, who expressly and voluntarily gave her parental consent and conformity to the adoption of the said child by petitioners.

Finding the petition to be sufficient in form and substance, the Court sets the hearing of this case on 14 June 2002 at 8:30 in the morning at the Regional Trial Court, Branch 48, Manila. All interested parties are hereby ordered to appear on the said date, time and place to offer their opposition or show cause why the petition should not be granted.

Let a copy of this Order be published at the expense of the petitioners once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks such that the last publication shall not be later than 01 June 2002 or at least two (2) weeks before the date of hearing.

Let a copy of this Order as well as the Petition and its annexes be furnished the Office of the Solicitor General and the Department of Social Welfare and Development and for their respective representative to appear on the said date and time of hearing. The latter office is hereby ordered to conduct a case study report on the petitioners and the minors and to submit the said report on or before the date of hearing.

IT IS SO ORDERED.
Manila, 02 May 2002.

NIMFA CUESTA VILCHES
Judge

(PDI--May 9, 16 & 23, 2002)

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Assistant Director

DIEGO H. GUTIERREZ

National Bureau of Investigation

Has peacefully joined his Creator on May 19, 2002 at the age of 64.

His loving wife Justice **ANGELINA SANDOVAL-GUTIERREZ;** children **AILEEN & ROBERT MARCON, FRANCIS,** and **JAMES;** Aunt **ALEJANDRA SANDOVAL;** sisters **CELING, REMY,** and **YOYIE;** sisters-in-law **MARIA S. CORONEL** and **MELY P. SANDOVAL;** brothers-in-law **MEL C. GUTIERREZ** and **TONY P. SANDOVAL;** nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart, Sacred Heart corner Kamagong Streets, Makati City.

He will be laid to rest at the Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque, Metro Manila after the 8:00 a.m. Mass on Friday, May 24, 2002 at the National Shrine of the Sacred Heart.

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Dra. Patria Altavas Morente-Alba

of Roxas City, Capiz

Peacefully joined her Creator on May 21, 2002
at the age of 74.

Her late husband **Nando** (†); loving children **Buding** and **Stefanie, Pito, Ria** and **Hendrix Reyes**; her siblings **Diva** and **Serge Isada, Jo, Lita, Liling** and **Pat Valenzuela, Doy** and **Tita**; grandchildren, nephews and nieces request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest.

Her body lies at the Family Chapel in Villa Patria, Roxas City, Capiz.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 26, 2002 at the Roxas City Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass. .

ATTY. MARIO F. CLUTARIO, SR.

Peacefully joined our Creator
on May 19, 2002 at the age of 86.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at No. 2 Marietta Street, Romeo-Marietta Village, Brgy. Sta. Lucia, Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

NOTICE OF INTERMENT

JUSTICE JUSTINIANO P. CORTEZ

MAY 25, 2002
After 8:30 a.m. Mass at
Santuario Del Sto. Cristo
83 F. Blumentritt, San Juan
Metro Manila

In Loving Memory

on the 10th Death Anniversary

of our beloved

1Lt. FRANCISCO A. VILLANUEVA

PMA Cl '87 and PAFFS Cl '89

Who died on May 23, 1992 at Salegseg, Balbalan, Kalinga Apayao while on a combat support mission for Army troopers.

Holy Masses will be offered in his memory on May 23, 2002
at the following churches:

Sta. Monica Parish, Botolan, Zambales	6:30 AM
St. Augustine Cathedral, Iba, Zambales	5:30 PM
San Lorenzo Ruiz Parish, Olongapo City	6:00 AM
Christ the King Parish, Project 7, Quezon City	6:00 PM
Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio	4:00 PM

His family requests relatives, friends and those whose lives Francis has touched to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

ATTY. JOSE B. LAYUG

UP Law Class of 1966

Peacefully joined our Lord
on May 22, 2002.

His beloved wife **Estela**; children **Jeffrey** and **Ginbee, Jay** and **Toi Toi** and **Dennis**; grandchildren **Cesca** and **Mycko**; mother-in-law **Ising** and aunt **Espie**; sister **Siony**; in-laws and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Park Chapel in Marikina City.

His remains will be cremated on May 25, 2002 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."

Matthew 10:39

In Loving Memory

On the Eleventh Death Anniversary of

GORGONIA MEDINA VITUG

of Arayat, Pampanga and Quezon City
who joined our Creator on May 24, 1991

Masses will be offered at the following churches on May 24, 2002.

St. Catherine Parish Church, *Arayat, Pampanga*	6:30 AM
Sto. Domingo Church, *Quezon Avenue, Quezon City*	12:15 PM
Most Holy Redeemer Parish, *Brixton Hill, Quezon City*	6:30 PM

US vows support for RP bid to join Egmont Group

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE UNITED States has committed to support the Philippines' bid to become a member of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units but only after the Philippines was removed from the list of countries perceived as uncooperative in the global fight against money laundering.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Francis Ricciardone said this in yesterday's signing of a memorandum of agreement between the US Agency for International Development and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas for a $750,000 worth of financial and technical assistance for the country's anti-money laundering campaign.

The Egmont Group is an informal association of 58 countries with recognized expertise in financial intelligence.

"We hope to help bring the Philippines to the Egmont Group and we are confident that this cooperation (in efforts against money laundering) will continue so that the Philippines will be up to world standards in fighting money laundering," said Ricciardone.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the country was expecting to be removed from the Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) list in June this year or February next year, the next two regular meetings of FATF.

Certain quarters refused to provide the country's Anti-Money Laundering Council access to important information on certain money laundering cases saying it was not a full-fledged financial intelligence unit because it was not yet a member of the Egmont Group.

The Japanese government, for instance, refused to provide the Anti-Money Laundering Council the information it needed to build up its case against self-styled cult leader Genta Ogami.

"Our goal is to be removed from the FATF list when it holds a plenary meeting next month," Buenaventura said.

Buenaventura is expecting FATF to raise certain issues that the government will have to address this year so that the international body can decide on the de-listing issue in its February meeting.

The FATF, the global anti-money laundering watchdog, meets only twice a year—in February and June. Buenaventura said the Philippines would take up with the FATF in its meeting next month the country's achievements in putting in place a law and certain administrative policies against money laundering.

"Once we are removed from the FATF list, we hope we will already be accepted as a member of the Egmont Group with the support of the US," said the BSP chief who also chairs the Anti-Money Laundering Council.

BUENAVENTURA

Despite the passage of an anti-money laundering law last September and the signing of its implementing rules and regulations last March, the Philippines remained in the FATF list.

Michael Camdessus, former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, had estimated that some $600 billion (or P30 trillion) of illegally acquired funds were being laundered yearly. This represents between 2 and 5 percent of the world's gross domestic product.

The fight against dirty money intensified after the Sept. 11 attacks in the US on suspicion that the terrorist activities were financed with laundered funds.

In the Philippines, FATF is focusing on how to address the illegal flow of funds to Mindanao-based bandits, like the Abu Sayyaf group which is believed to be linked to the Bin Laden group.

In the meantime, USAID director Patricia Buckles said during the MOA signing that the assistance to the BSP might be extended to the financial sector, including the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

Buenaventura said the BSP agreement with the USAID would expand and strengthen the cooperation between the two groups in banking supervision. Other areas covered by the MOA are training, support for software and hardware acquisition, and database sharing.

Buenaventura said the central bank had advanced a P100-million budget for the Anti-Money Laundering Council. The law provides a yearly appropriation for the council in the budget.

Under the law, the council can ask banks operating in the country to freeze any suspicious account worth at least P4 million. However, details of such accounts could not be revealed unless the council was able to secure a court order.

The country's strict policy on deposit secrecy was one of the concerns being cited by the FATF.

Nestle expects to hit 28% export growth goal

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NESTLE Philippines Inc. is confident of hitting its 28-percent export growth target this year following the speedy resolution of its labor problem in its Cabuyao, Laguna, factory—the Swiss giant's main production plant for infant nutrition and filled milk.

Nestle Philippines is projecting its milk exports to hit $92 million this year, up from $72 million a year ago.

Milk products, which account for the bulk of Nestle Philippines' exports, are expected to jump by 18 percent to $63 million this year from $53 million from last year. Nestle Philippines also exports breakfast cereals under its Asean product sharing agreement with other Nestle subsidiaries in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand.

A Nestle official said the swift resolution of its labor problem in Cabuyao—where it produces its infant milk—had averted a possible slowdown in its production of milk products that would have derailed its export shipments to other Asean countries. Nestle manufactures filled milk from its Cagayan de Oro factory.

The Department of Labor and Employment has ruled in favor of Nestle in a labor dispute that struck its Cabuyao plant in January this year. The Nestle official said the over 600 employees who were dismissed due to the illegal strikes were already replaced.

The company previously threatened to shelve its P3-billion expansion program in the Philippines if the government failed to address an impending strike that could cripple its Cabuyao plant and affect its regional supply chain for milk products. Nestle has chosen the Philippines as its production center for infant formula milk in the region in time for the reduction in tariffs on intra-regional trade to a range of 0 and 5 percent under the Asean Free Trade Area next year.

Nestle Philippines is also projecting bullish growth in the domestic sector this year after its sales jumped 20 percent to P48 billion in 2001 from P40 billion in 2000 due to aggressive marketing and product launches.

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The New Motorola V.6

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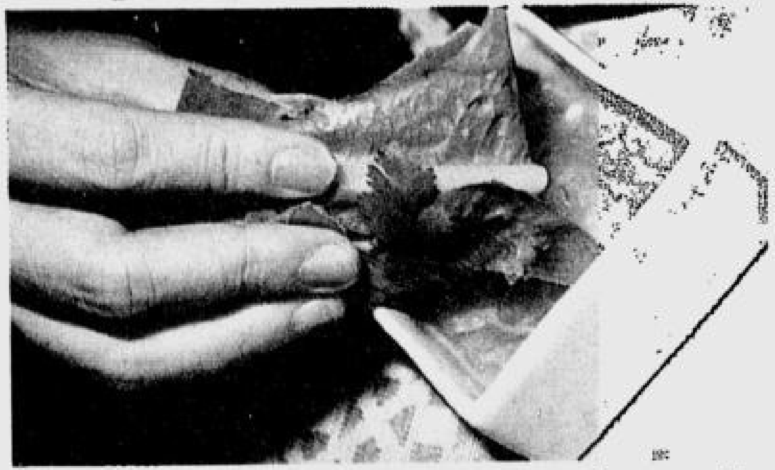
LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

Step-by-step



How to eat Vietnamese spring rolls

Story on p.C7

How to prepare French toast

Story on p.C2

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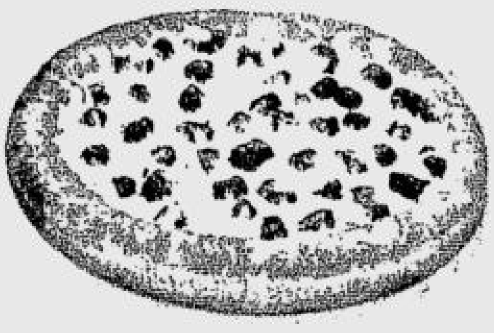

How to make cheeseburger à la Shakey's

By Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Roger Carpio

A PIZZA'S secret is in the crust, not the toppings. Throw in pepperoni, cheese, ham, bacon, mushroom, veggies and what-not—if the crust is a flop, the pizza is doomed to the dusty archives of a gratefully forgotten history.

For 27 years, Shakey's Pizza has regaled the Filipinos' palate with its original crisp and crunchy thin-crust pizza. With 85 branches across the country—including three newly opened outlets in Daet, SM Manila and Dumaguete City—and soon to open 12 more this year, Shakey's Pizza is geared to entertain and please more families for many years to come.

The recent years, however, have seen pizza parlors mushrooming across the country, and with it was born a pizza revolution and a myriad of offerings—from thin to thick crust, with toppings ranging from airborne creatures and organic greens to denizens of the deep.

Improved version

Naturally, an experienced pizza institution like Shakey's quickly put their Quality Assurance Research and Development (QAR&D) team to work on a new pizza twist. The result? A delightful, improved version of the now retired Pan Pizza called Super Pan Pizza.

"We worked on the formulation of the weight of the dough. It's now thicker—crispy on the outside yet soft on the inside," says Josie Barrameda, QAR&D manager. She says it took a year before they finally perfected the formulation—from dough to toppings.

Introduced a month ago, the Super Pan Pizza has already earned a steady following among pizza lovers. "The Super Pan Pizza has doubled in sales and is now hitting 60-70 percent of the product line," says Mimi Jara, general manager of Shakey's Phils. Where the old Pan Pizza posted 8 percent in sales, the improved Super Pan Pizza shot up to 20 percent.

Already, there are six flavors to choose from: Belly Buster, loaded with 11 all-meat toppings and a shower of feta cheese; Power

HOW/ p.C7

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5. PLDT will install the phone upon receipt of payment.
6. Promo runs from May 5 to August 5, 2002 nationwide.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1564, Series of 2002

Capture the thrill of the Phonetastic Festival. Just visit any of the following PLDT offices in the following areas:

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La Union - Laoag
Tarlac - Camiling, Capaz, Concepcion, UP, Paniqui, Victoria
Baguio - La Trinidad, Naguilian

SOUTH LUZON
Batangas - Alitagtag, Lipa, San Jose, Talisay, Tanauan
Calamba - Canlubang, LTI, UPLB
Kawit - Carmona, Cavite, CEPZA, Dasmarinas, FCIE, Indang, Naic, Rosario, Silang, Trece Martirez, Tagaytay
Lucena - Mauban, Tayabas, Legazpi, San Pablo, Pila, Sta. Cruz, Paete
Malolos - Galeria, Baliuag, Bulacan, Guiguinto, Hagonoy, Plaridel, San Miguel

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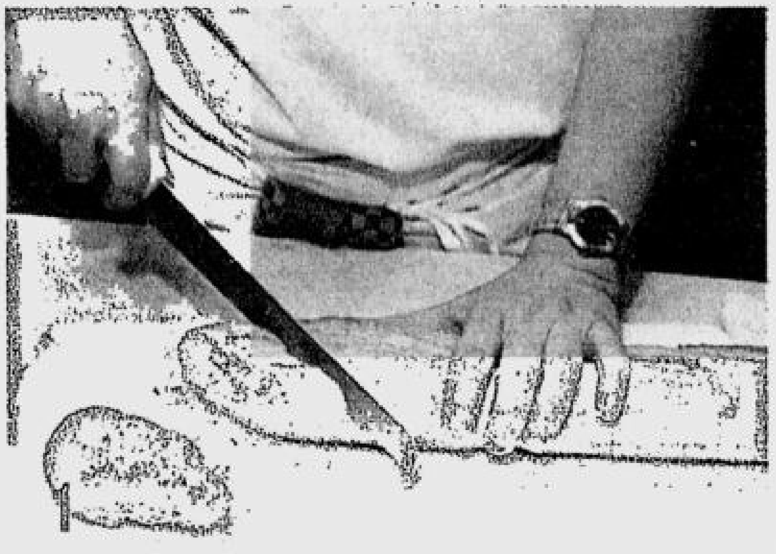
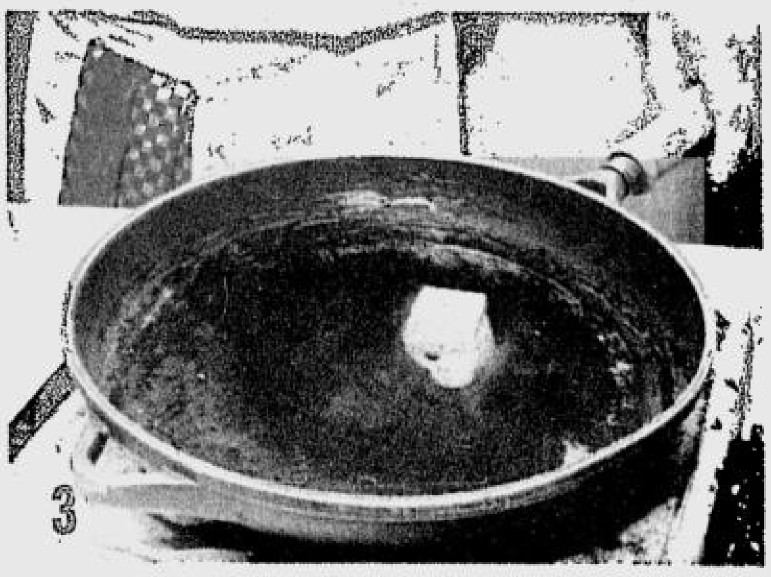
East - Antipolo, Cainta, Greenhills/ POEA, Pasig, Mandaluyong, New Pasig, SM Megamall, South Marikina



SLICE French bread diagonally.

IN A BOWL, mix together eggs, milk and sugar. Set aside.



MELT butter in a skillet or in a nonstick frying pan.

French toasts make easy breakfast treats

By Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

WONDERIN' what to do with your days-old bread? Try the French toast! It's something you can do with the kids who will be hanging around the kitchen a few more weeks before school starts.

STEP BY STEP

French toasts are slices of stale bread, soaked in beaten egg and milk, then fried in butter and sprinkled with sugar and spices (cinnamon is especially good). They are not only a welcome addition to your breakfast staple, but are also quick and delicious nibbles for when time is at a minimum.

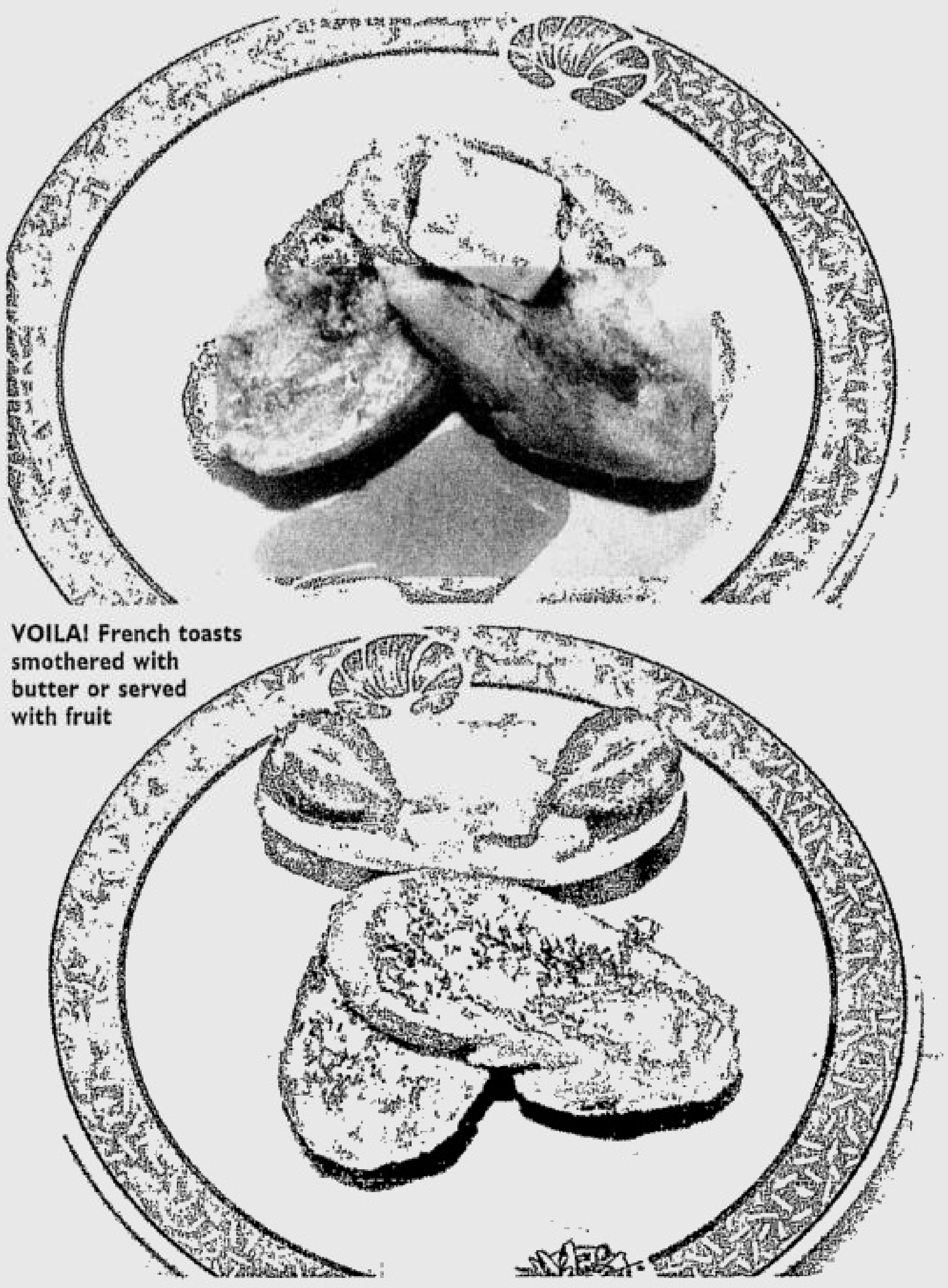
French toasts are super rich, sweet and loaded with calories. The diet-conscious may shy away from these breakfast treats, but kids will love them any time with fresh orange juice or hot milk on the side.

Johnlu Koa of the popular French Baker offers three exciting ways to serve and eat French toasts. First, serve them with seasoned fresh fruits; second, sprinkle toasts with 1 tbsp of cinnamon and 2 tbsp sugar on top; third, top toasts with maple syrup and butter à la hotcake.

Johnlu says if you're not yet in the mood to make your own French toasts, just keep the stale bread in the chiller to delay the molding process.

Ingredients:
French bread or baguettes
2 whole eggs
¼ c UHD milk or skimmed milk
1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp butter

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph



VOILA! French toasts smothered with butter or served with fruit

DIP slices of bread into the egg mixture and place them in the pan till delicate brown.

FLIP bread over for even cooking. Transfer to a serving platter.

A classic and feverish family vacation

From page C8

Somewhere between

The Relais & Chateaux is not a chain of hotels, but an organization that hovers somewhere between a system of accreditation and an alliance network. All the hotels that are part of this network are independently run, and are chosen for their charm and character. Most of them are not in major cities, but in small towns not accessible by train, or in some cases, in complete isolation. The description for each hotel gives not just road directions, but GPS coordinates as well for those who arrive by helicopter, which gives an indication of the sort of clientele that frequents them. But we did the math (or rather, my father did), and discovered that rather than going to the obligatory tourist haunts and taking the obligatory pictures in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa and so on, we could stay at excellent hotels and eat very well.

At that point, as we patted our happily distended tummies, this option seemed far more appealing than taking in art and culture and all that claptrap. Furthermore, the Relais & Chateaux network offers the service of making onward reservations for you. Our new plan, then, was to drive in a vaguely westward direction, spending each night at a different hotel, until we reached Eugenie-les-Bains, where we would climax with dinner at one of the most legendary restaurants in the world, that of Michel Guerard.

So the next day we went to the local Hertz office and, despite my attempts to point out to my father the joys of driving about in an open-top S-class, we rented the cheapest car that actually had air-conditioning, a generic blue Renault; and in the interest of further economy, a diesel-powered one at that. Expecting the usual sluggish churn of a diesel engine, I tapped on the accelerator, and we shot off at an alarming speed.

It was my first time to drive outside of the Philippines, but I soon discovered that the French drive much the same way we do. The difference is that the roads are well paved, everything is well sign-posted, and that the road maps actually correspond to reality. Furthermore, the speed limits are realistically high; and although there are speed traps, what the police do is take down your plate number and send a ticket to your address (which we had listed, very simply, as "various hotels"). On the other hand, we had all the elements of a classic road-trip scenario: I hadn't spent more than 24 hours with my parents in years; my father couldn't read maps; my mother was prone to motion sickness.

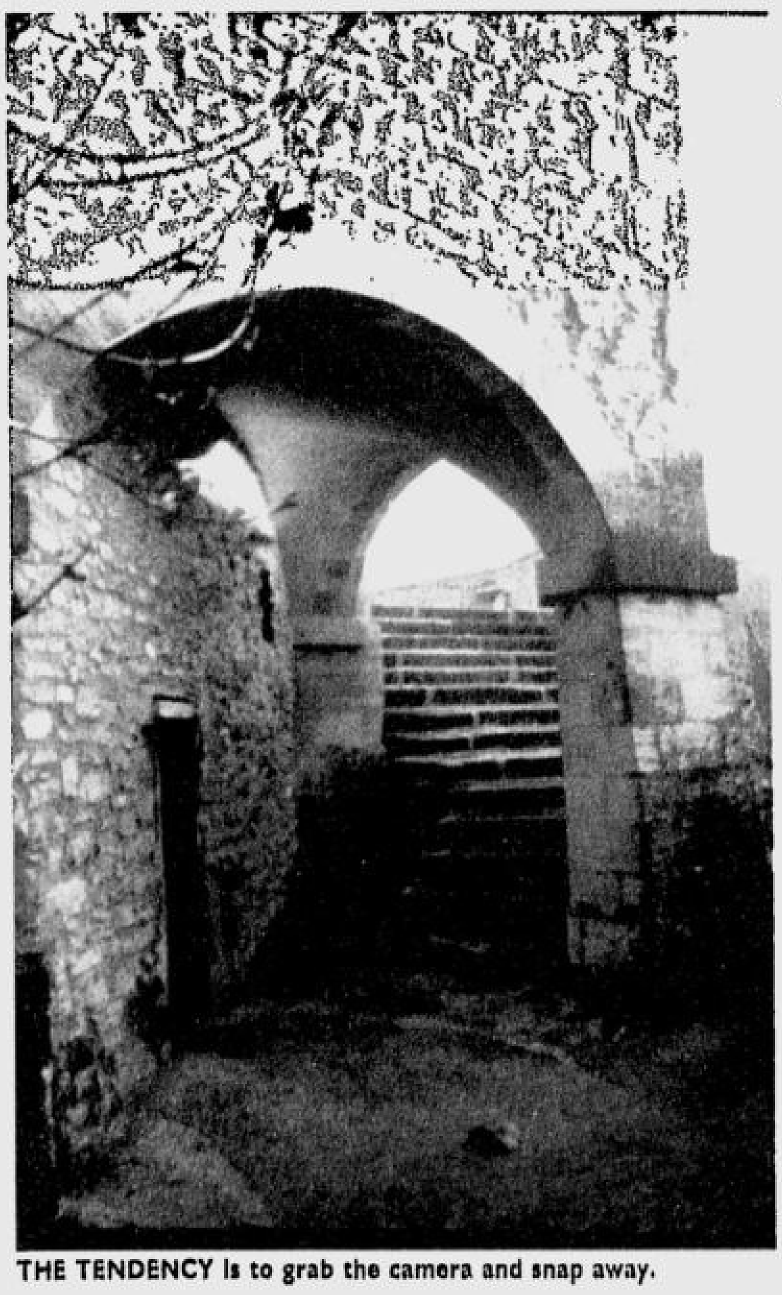
Michelin maps are amazingly detailed, but they open up to a size that is larger than the average Paris apartment. It was a classic family vacation: "Which way do I go?" "Turn left—no, no, turn right. Oh, wait, this is the map for Burgundy. Are we in the Perigord?" "Why don't we stop and ask for directions?" "Look where you're going!" "I can't see, the map is in the way" and so on.

Hay fever

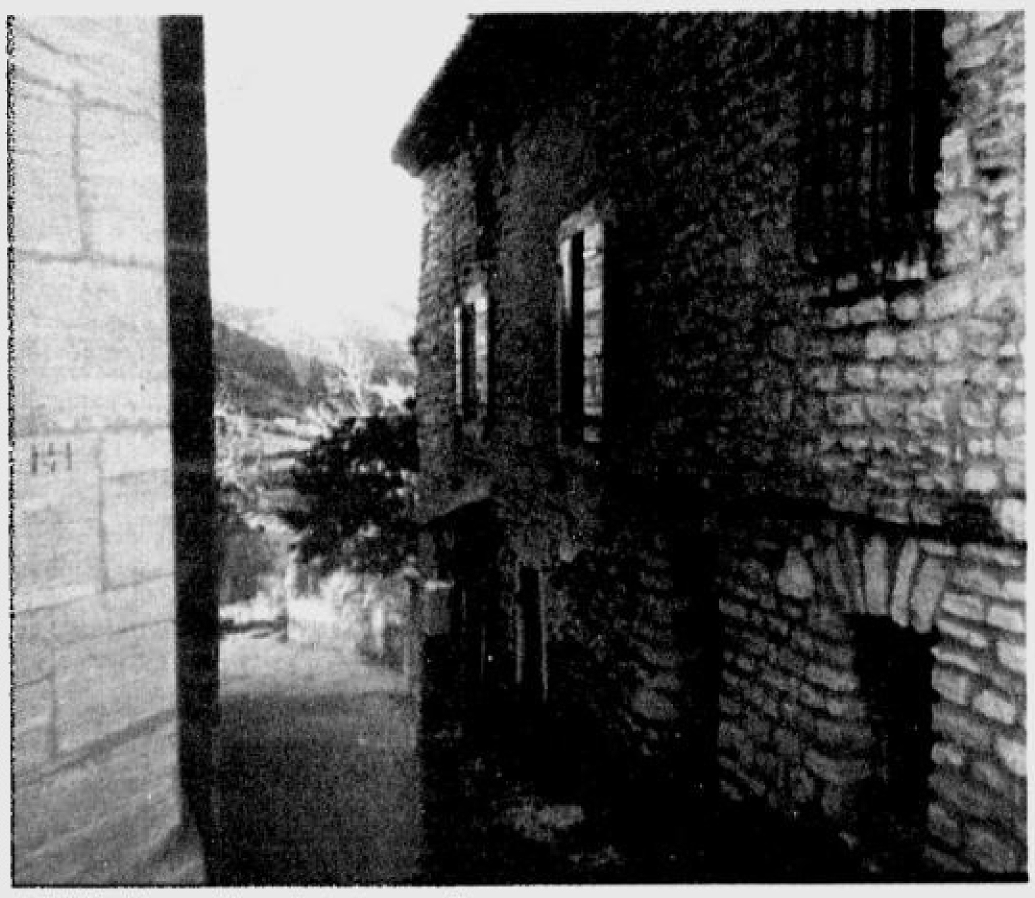
It was around this point that the hay fever began to make its presence felt. First my eyes began to water, but I thought it might be just the joy of seeing my parents again. Then my nose began to run: not a nice, respectable congestion, which could be blown into a handkerchief in a satisfying gob, but a thin, insistent trickle that would wait until a particularly tricky stretch of road and then quietly wind its way downward, and no amount of sniffing would make it go back up again. Soon my face was awash in a stream of various fluids.

Yet it was impossible to sustain bad humor for very long. The countryside we were passing through was beautiful in a manner that seemed created to evoke emotional responses, just as Paris seems to have been designed to stimulate intellectual activity. Perhaps the greatest irony of photography is that when we see a breathtaking landscape, we always seem to have seen it before; and so the mark of sophistication is to sniff and say: "Corny! Too much like a picture-postcard!" And for an amateur photographer like myself, the tendency is to grab the camera and begin snapping away. In this sense, being behind the wheel, with my brain too wrought to be able to pretend to be sophisticated, proved to be unexpectedly beneficial. The beauty of the south of France is a cliché, but it is so for a reason.

Dusk began to fall; the car was silent save for the alternating roar of the engine and squeal of the brakes as we wound our way into the mountains; the pile of sodden wads of tissue beside me grew. Our destination was the tiny, forgotten village, perched atop a mountain, called Crillon-le-Brave. To this day, although much of our trip is hazy, the night we spent there stands out in our memory, much in the way that its ancient stone walls stood out against the twilight as we rounded a bend and found that we had arrived.



THE TENDENCY is to grab the camera and snap away.



A TINY village with ancient stone walls

Bread as picnic companion

GARDENIA Bakeries has designed a special summer packaging for its Classic Enriched White Bread and High Fiber Wheat Bread, two of its most popular products.

Gardenia bread, the fastest selling loaf bread in the country today, has some friendly tips for those who are planning to go outing this season.

- A picnic is always fun, but don't forget the basics and a few taken-for-granted extras like medicine, comfy slippers, batteries, sunblock and other toiletries.
- Bring empty plastic bags that you can use to keep your wet bathing suits or rubber slippers.
- Don't forget the most important thing: food. Filipinos love to eat, so food and *merienda* are often major issues. Moms or those in charge of food and arrangements should always make food their top priority when planning an outing. Kids and teens get hungry often, and they'll crave for a sandwich or drink midway into the trip.

As a picnic companion, you'll never go wrong with Gardenia Bread because of its high nutrition content, guaranteed freshness and quality ingredients that bring out the bread's distinct good taste.

Gardenia Bread is available at supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores and variety stores in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

Learn back-to-school recipes

DOROTHY Ferreria, cooking school owner and cookbook author, will teach parents easy-to-do recipes for children on June 1 at the Grand Ballroom of the Ayala Alabang Country Club, 1-5 p.m.

The San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center has also invited Ateneo's Center for Family Ministries to talk about practical tips on how parents can guide and motivate children to perform better in their school work.

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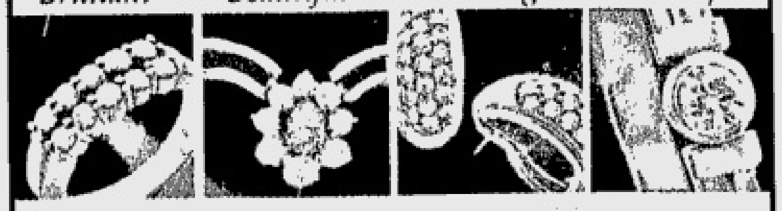
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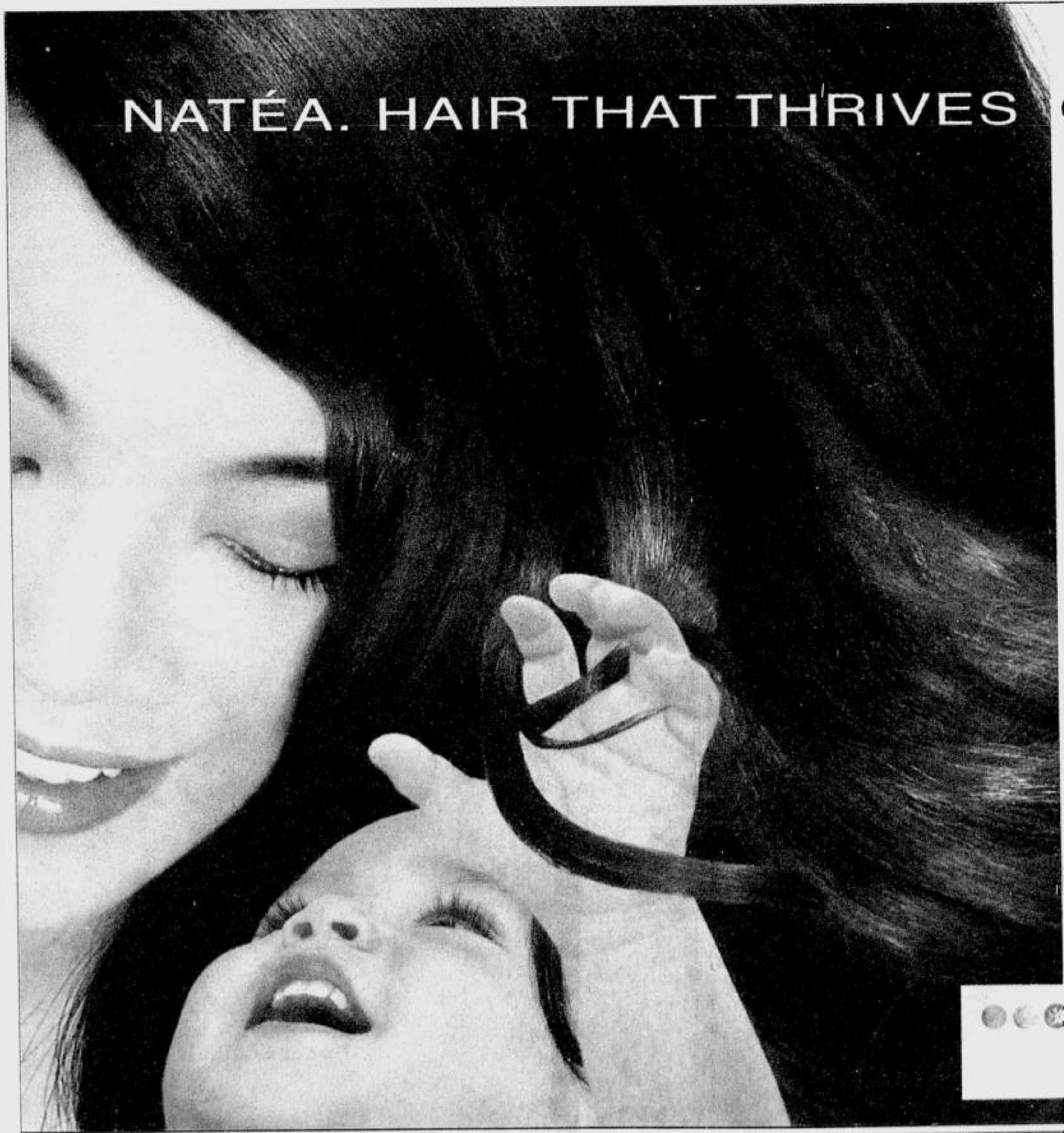
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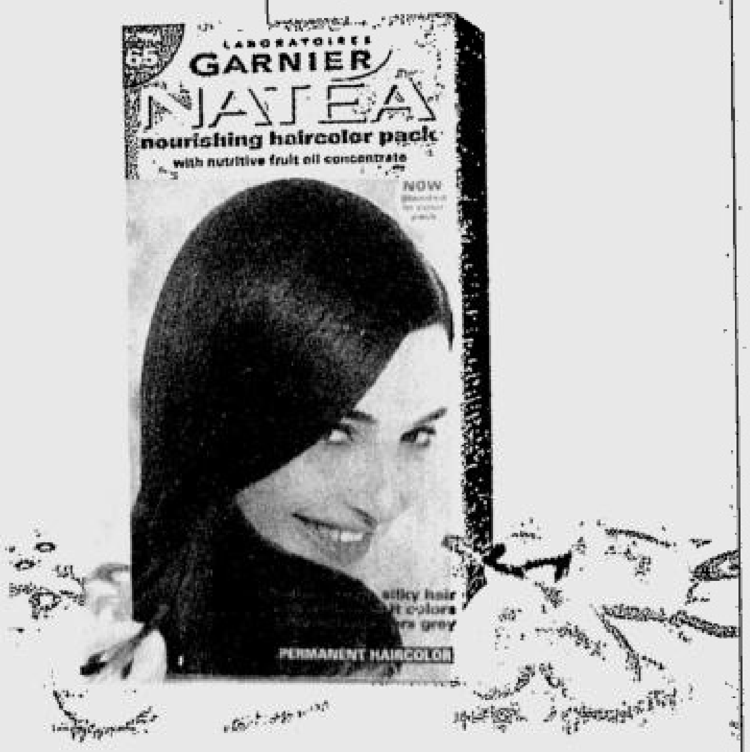
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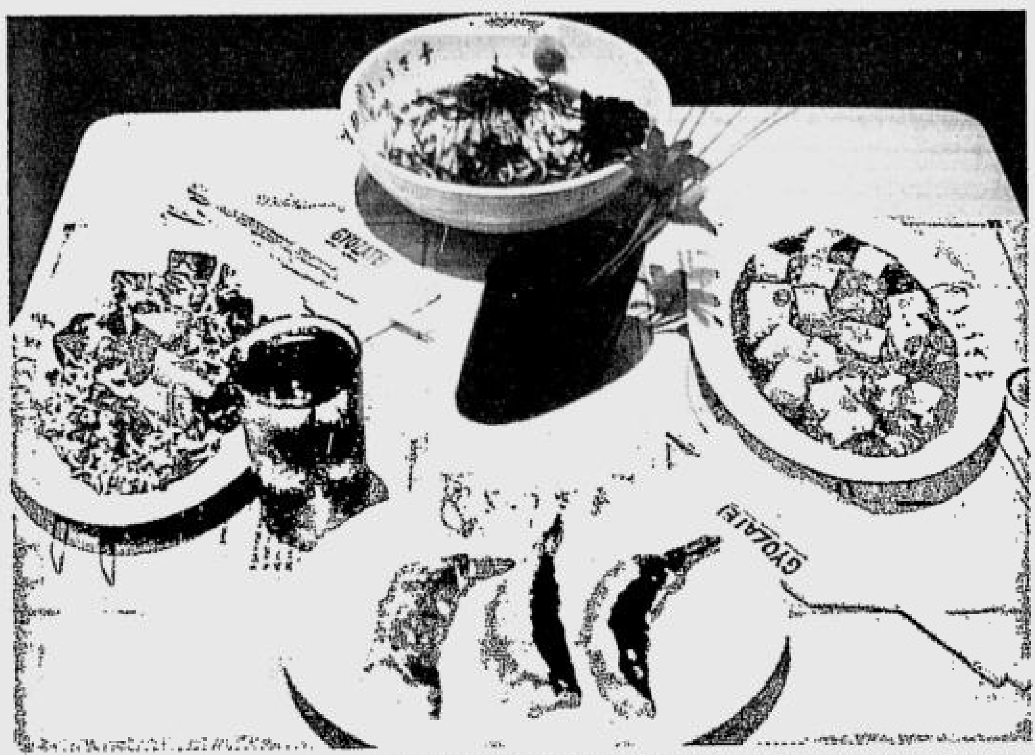


HIYASHI Chuka (cold noodles), Marbo Dofu (bean curd with chili ground pork), Shrimp Gyoza and Yasai Itame (stir-fried vegetables with beef or pork) at Gyozatei

Noodles sensation

DINING OUT

GYOZATEI—home of the unique shrimp *gyoza*—has a new batch of Japanese specialties. The Gyozatei-Tomas Morato outlet has included two appetizers, each prepared with a special sauce: *agedeshi dofu* (fried bean curd) and *hiya yako* (fresh tofu). The *marbo dofu* (bean curd with chili ground pork), which can also serve as rice topping, and the *yasai itame* (stir-fried vegetables that include bean sprouts, *nira*, carrots and mushrooms, with one's own choice of pork or liver) remain bestsellers. The outlet now offers 11 *gyoza* all in all, with the eight new variants being the following: *nira gyoza* (long onion), spinach *gyoza*, chili *gyoza* (ground pork with chili bean sauce), chicken *gyoza*, cuttlefish *gyoza*, tuna *gyoza*, leek *gyoza* and miso *gyoza*. For noodle lovers, there is the *gomuko kata* yakisoba (fried crispy noodles). It's a welcome addition to the Japanese restaurant's ramen soups—*tanmen* spicy, *shoyu*, *negi shoyu*, sesame, miso and *negi* miso. Another new unique treat from Gyozatei is the special cold noodles popularly known in Japan as the *hiyashi chuka*. Flavored with the distinctive sweet-and-sour *hiyashi* sauce, the cold noodle preparation is even made more special with a topping consisting of roast pork, dried seaweed, Japanese cucumber and fish cake. Patrons can look forward to more varieties in the months to come and new outlets to be opened in Greenbelt and Alabang. Gyozatei is located on Tomas Morato (corner Scout Madrinan), QC.

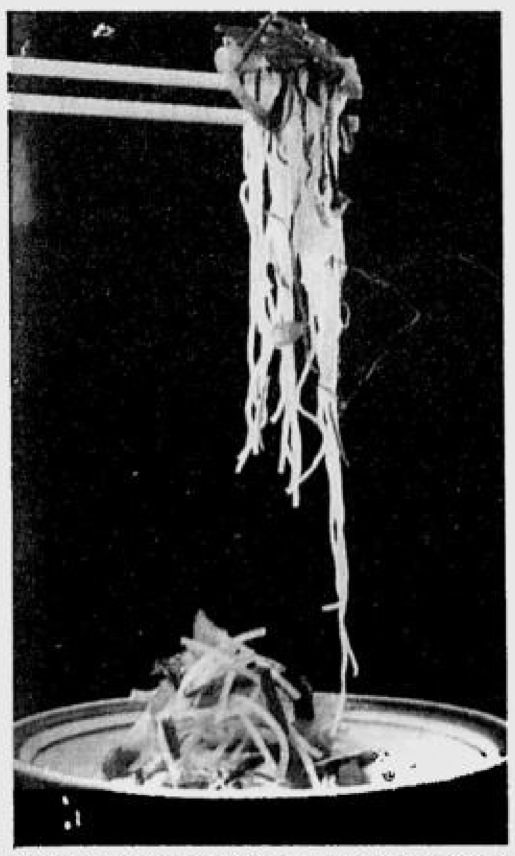
HOLIDAY INN MANILA invites Pavilion Court diners to taste an assortment of noodles. Enjoy these Oriental favorites: Hot and Sour Noodle (rice vermicelli with fresh Australian scallop, straw mushrooms, red chili, ginger, and chopped garlic in clear soup); Classic Japanese Noodle (fresh *udon* noodle with crab stick, fish cake, beansprouts and spinach in chicken stock); Cellophane Noodle (sautéed fresh broccoli, carrots, red bell pepper, black fungus and spinach); Light Beef Noodle Soup (sliced beef with shredded cucumber, mushrooms and rice vermicelli in chicken stock); Miso Noodle (beef brisket with fresh udon noodle, cabbage, beans, bell pepper and black mushrooms with miso paste). Available during lunch, 12 n.n.-3 p.m., and dinner, 6:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m. Call 526-1212 local 2503.

MANILA MIDTOWN HOTEL'S executive chef Stefan Farkas recommends an array of Spain's best cuisine from Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. For only P567 net, sample Madrileno, Sopa de Ajo, Asparagus from Aranjuez Zarzuela, Cocido con Judias Blancas, or Paella Valencia, which are complemented with wines from the region. Call 526-7001 local 6554.

TAPAS Tapas Bar and Restaurant, with branches at Dish in Rockwell Power Plant Mall, Makati, and Boracay Regency Resort in Boracay Island, now offers catering services for all occasions at affordable prices. Try Spanish Tapas like Banderillas (mini skewers), Champignon al Ajillo (mushroom), Tanguingui Ahumados (smoked tanguingui), Patatas a la Brava (roasted potatoes), Ravas Fritas (fried squid tentacles), Chorizo Frito (fried Spanish sausage), Croquetas de Pollo (chicken croquettes), Calamares Fritos (fried squid), Mejillones al Horno (baked mussels), Pinchos Morunos (Moorish Kebab), and Tortilla Y Anchoa (omelet) plus Paella, Zarzuela de Mariscos, Blue Marlin a la Parilla, Callos, Lengua, Salpicao, and Pollo al Ajillo. Choices of Vegetarian, Cocktail, and Seafood Fiesta are available in the catering menu but you can also choose your own food combinations. Call (02) 687-4328 (Corporate Office), (02) 757-70177 (Makati) and (036) 2886488 (Boracay).

HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA celebrates Europe's asparagus harvest season until May 25. Prince Albert Rotisserie is flying in fresh green and white asparagus for diners' delectation. Executive chef Cyrille Soenen combines the "queen of vegetables" with other choice ingredients to come up with Cream of White Asparagus and Duck Liver Flan, Roasted Asparagus with Grated Dried Cepes and Red Wine Jus, Rabbit and Prawns Simmered with Green Asparagus and Potato Gnocchi and Pan-fried Scallops with Grated Hazelnut on a Bed of Leeks and Asparagus with Truffle Vinaigrette Dressing. Boiled green asparagus with soft boiled egg and crispy smoked ham as well as cold or warm asparagus with a choice of hollandaise, mousseline, herb vinaigrette or gratinated sauce are also available. Call 819-0645.

MANILA MIDTOWN HOTEL serves Tequila Sunrise Fruit Cake for only P55++ per slice. Available at Maxims Pastry Shop, located at the hotel's ground floor. Call 526-7001 local 6551.



NOODLES at the Holiday Inn Manila's Pavilion Court

OVEN-BAKED turbot cutlet with vegetable ragout parma ham and buerre blanc

Young, award-winning chef leads Norwegian fest

By Bambi Harper

THE QUEEN of Communications at the Mandarin Oriental (a.k.a. Charisse Chuidian) was requesting my presence at lunch at The Tivoli. Norwegian Ambassador Paul Moe was coming, Micky was expected as well as Chona. All I had to do was to bring my appetite (unfortunately not a problem) and prepare myself for a breath and taste of the Norwegian *fjords*.

With a coastline that extends 2,740 km, bounded on the north by the Barents Sea, on the south by Kagerrak Strait and the North Sea, and on the west by the Norwegian Sea, it's no wonder the cuisine of Norway abounds with seafood specialties: a lot of salmon, halibut, haddock, cod and monkfish, not to mention Norwegian caviar, scallops, lobsters and crabs.

Aside from the fact that the Tivoli has a reputation for the creativity of their chefs and their food is usually excellent, there was also curiosity about the guest chef, Stein Erik Alvestad, who had won several awards despite being only 22 years old. Afterwards, I figured he's probably on his way to winning several more if the lunch was any indication. Alvestad placed second in the 2002 Skills Olympic culinary competition and knew what he wanted to be ever since he was 15. We're lucky he wasn't good at literature or math or he probably wouldn't have become a member of the prestigious Norwegian Junior National Team at The Culinary Institute of Norway and won all those awards.

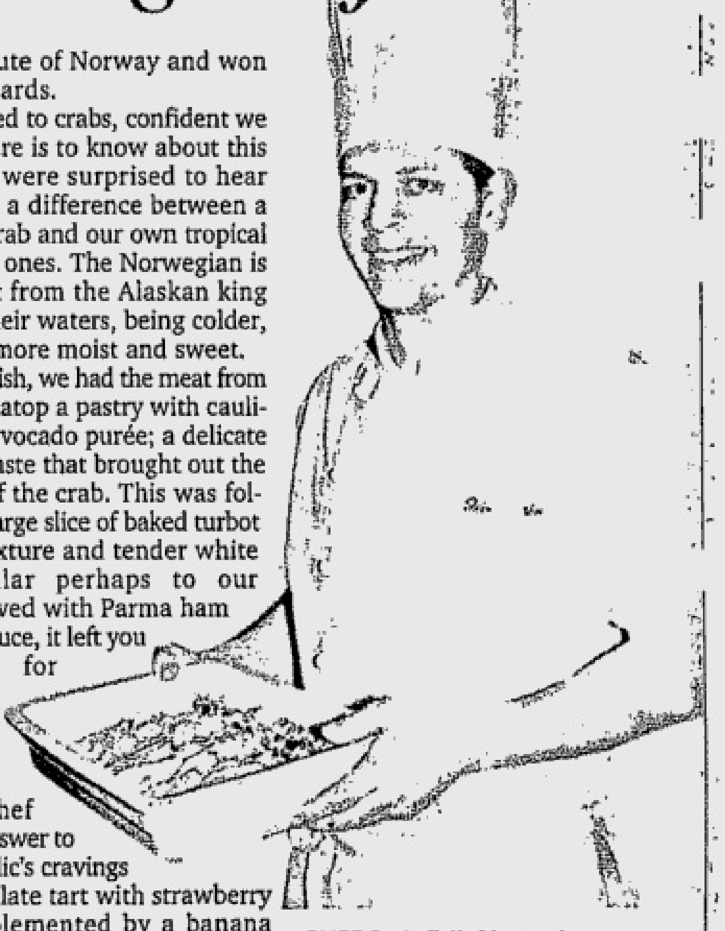
We, so used to crabs, confident we know all there is to know about this crustacean, were surprised to hear that there is a difference between a cold water crab and our own tropical warm water ones. The Norwegian is also distinct from the Alaskan king crab since their waters, being colder, the meat is more moist and sweet.

As a first dish, we had the meat from the claw set atop a pastry with cauliflower and avocado purée; a delicate and subtle taste that brought out the sweetness of the crab. This was followed by a large slice of baked turbot with fine texture and tender white meat, similar perhaps to our *apahap*. Served with Parma ham and white sauce, it left you yearning for more, which is probably the point.

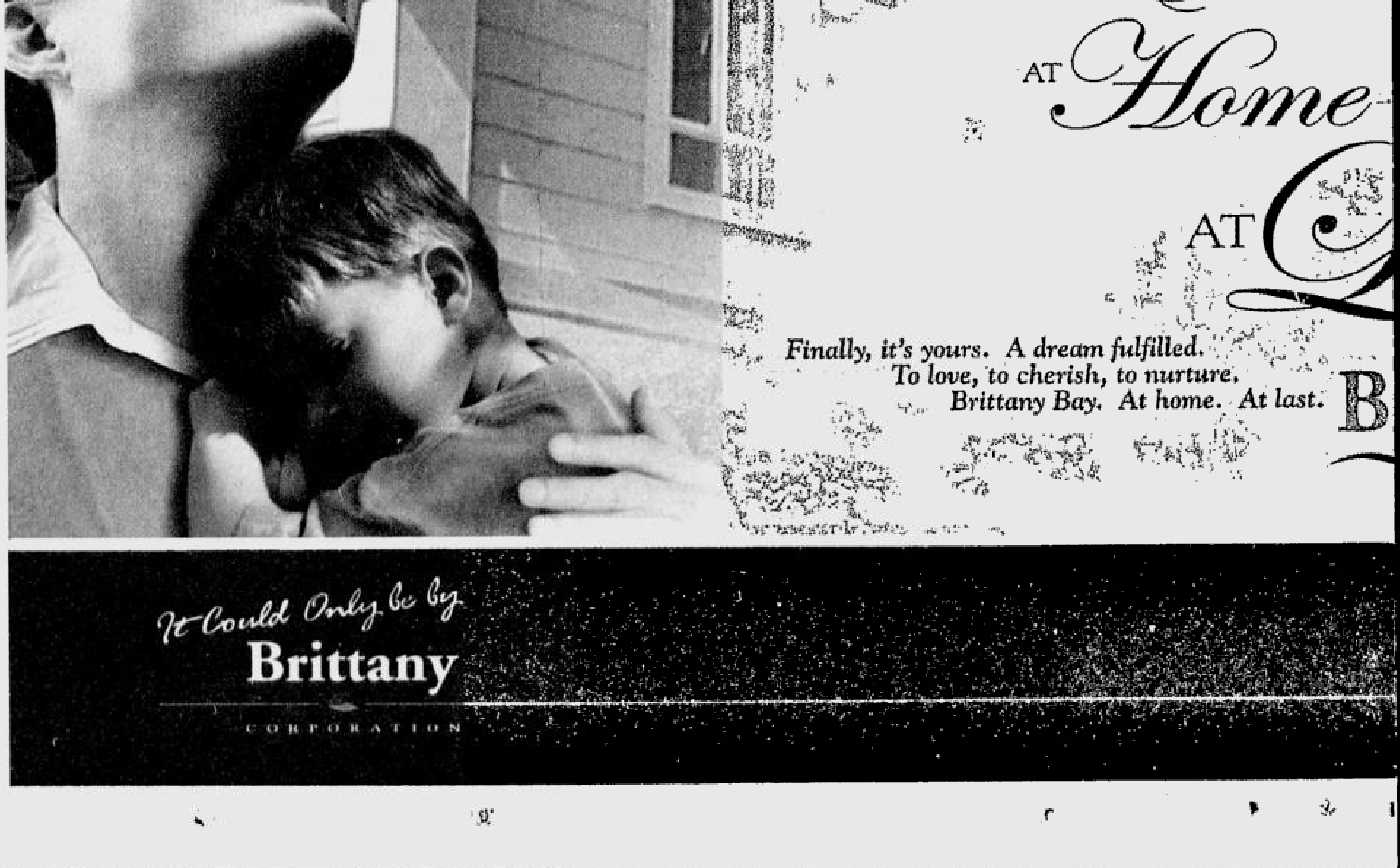
Young Chef Alvestad's answer to the chocoholic's cravings was a chocolate tart with strawberry salad complemented by a banana sherbet, very light and delicate in flavor that eased my conscience. It's a good thing Norway is famous for seafood rather than carbohydrates, my other downfall.

The guests raised their glasses in *skol* to young Alvestad, the Nordic champion for apprentices in 1999, and the Norwegian champion that same year. This year, he has just finished assisting the Norwegian team that won the gold in Singapore's Salon Culinaire and is on his way to Australia to gain more experience. Among his creations available at the Tivoli are Potato Blinis with Norwegian Caviar; Salmon Baked with Herb Crus; Haddock Fillet with Tapenade; Pan-fried Cod with Lentils and Halibut served with Veal Tongue Grilled Chorizo Sausage, Roasted Mushrooms and Veal Stock. Not to forget—the best revenge is living well.

Festival "Norway Bound" runs through May 26 at the Tivoli, held in cooperation with Snorre and Werdenberg International.



CHEF Stein Erik Alvestad



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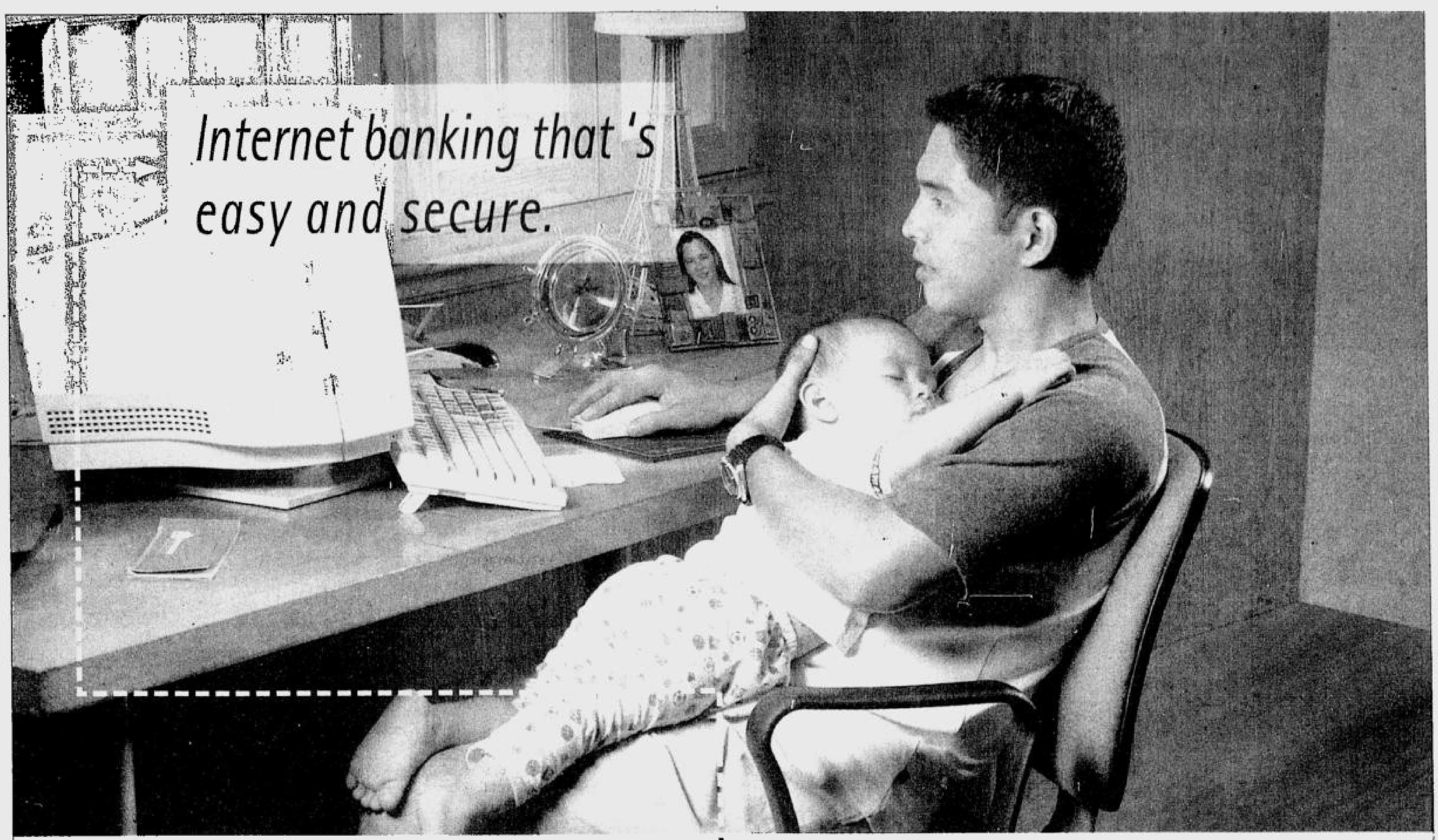

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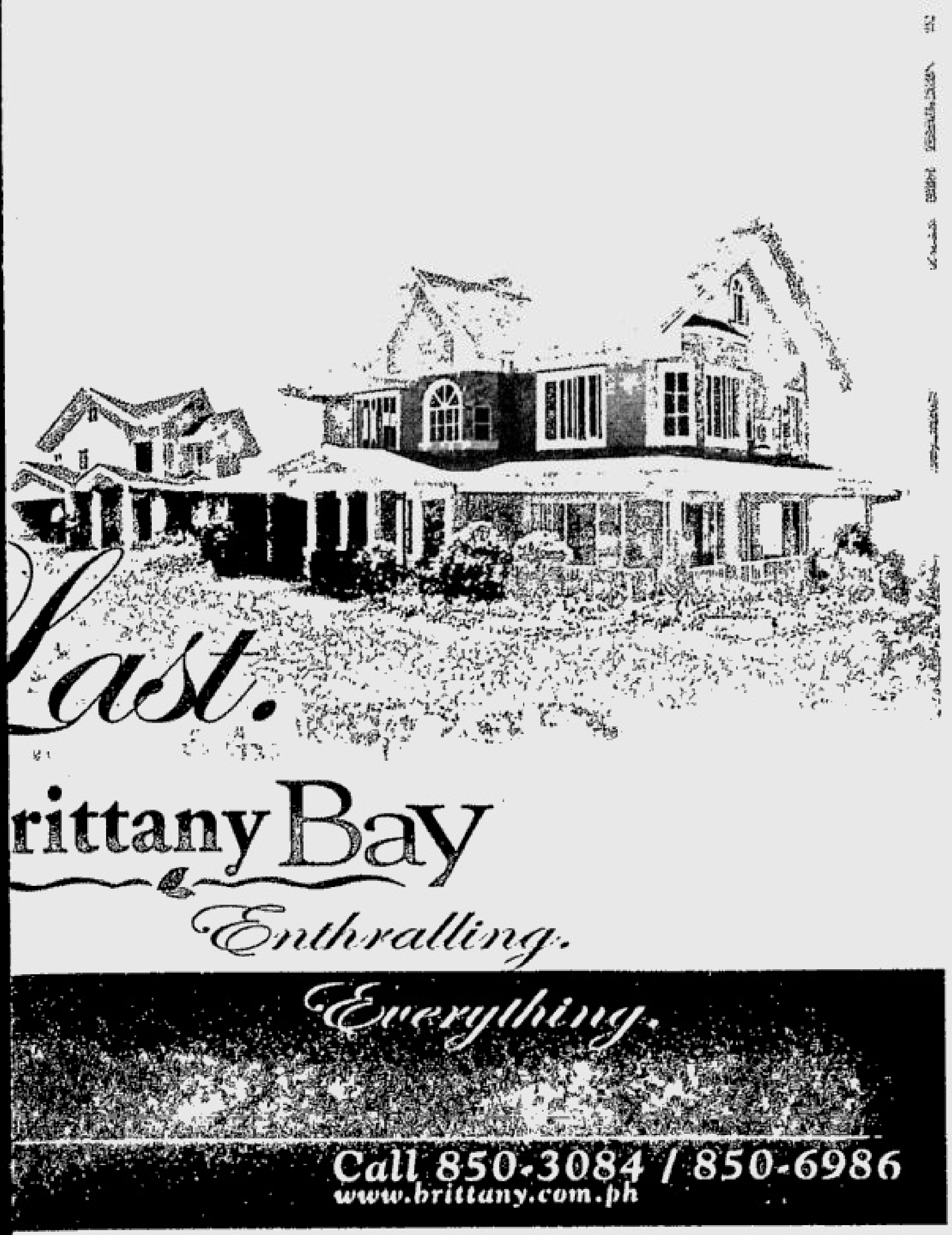


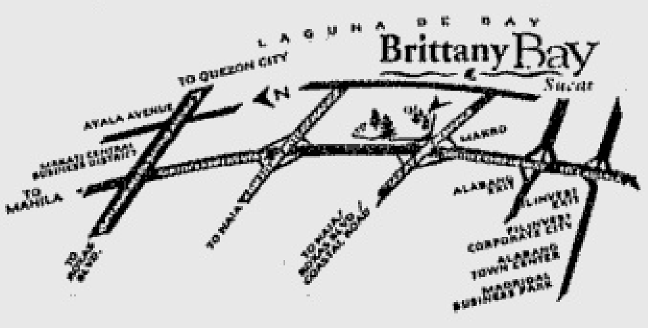
Enthralling. Everything.

With a location so accessible, right along the South Super Highway just ten meters away from the Sucat Interchange, Brittany Bay is close to everything. After all, Makati's business and commercial districts are just twenty minutes away, while thriving Alabang can be reached as easily as five minutes. And, more importantly, Brittany Bay is a self-contained community where you can reside, work and do just about everything in between. Thirty-five hectares of sloping terrain and sprawling greenery that look toward the idyllic Laguna de Bay, with its beautiful sunrise, provide the tranquil setting to Brittany Bay. Envisioned to be the city of the future, Brittany Bay has an old world charm that is all its own. For everything here–from houses to offices and shopping stores to hangouts–is designed in elegant and colorful Neo-Victorian architecture and detail.

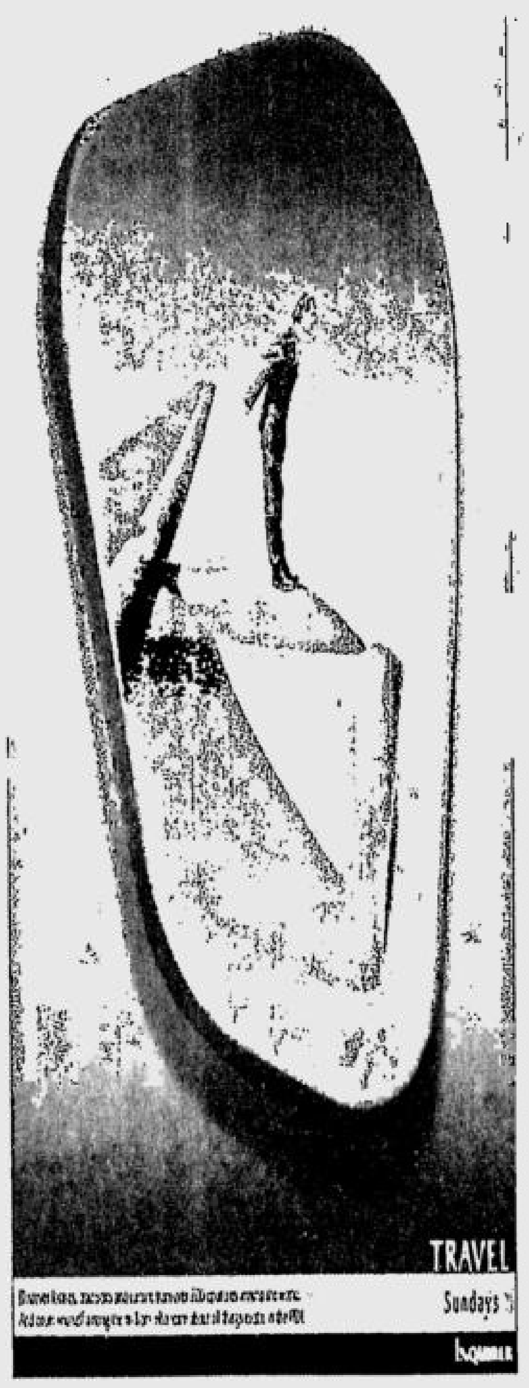
Brittany Bay, being a Brittany PrimeHUB undertaking, is meticulously masterplanned. Picturesque courtyards, carefully spread out all over, house the corporate offices and commercial and retail establishments. Shop in the fashionable stores, have a cup of coffee in a sidewalk cafe, and treat your family to dinner at your favorite restaurant. All these you can do just by walking or cycling, under the cooling foliage shade as you pass by the promenades. Rotundas with water feature links to Laguna de Bay endow you with a splashing view.

Your private sanctuary is situated in the luxurious, six-hectare La Posada. La Posada is limited to only ninety single-detached homes, with wide lots ranging from 220 to 500 square meters that make your house look much bigger, and spacious home floor areas between 155 to 300 square meters. With its porch, flat canopy, bay windows, roof shingles, front steps and eaves with simplified brackets, your home is endearingly quaint.

Everything is just so enthralling. Suddenly you realize that you're at home, at last... at Brittany Bay.

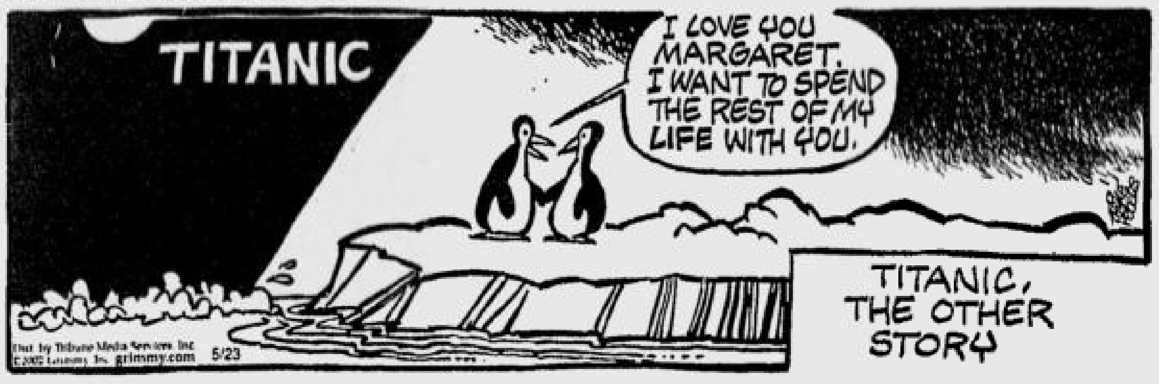


If your body can't go on a vacation, let your mind take the trip.



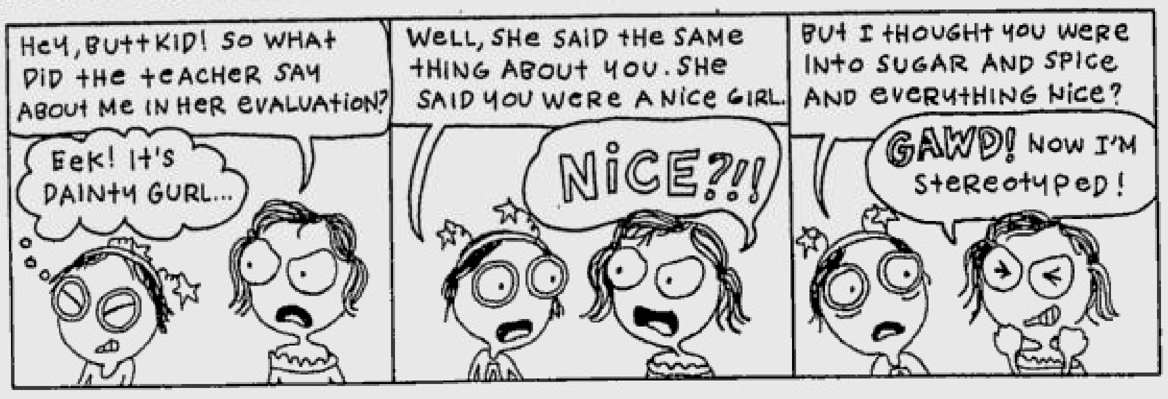
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


TITANIC
I LOVE YOU MARGARET. I WANT TO SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE WITH YOU.
TITANIC, THE OTHER STORY
Dist by Tribune Media Services Inc ©2002 Grimmy Inc. grimmy.com 5/23

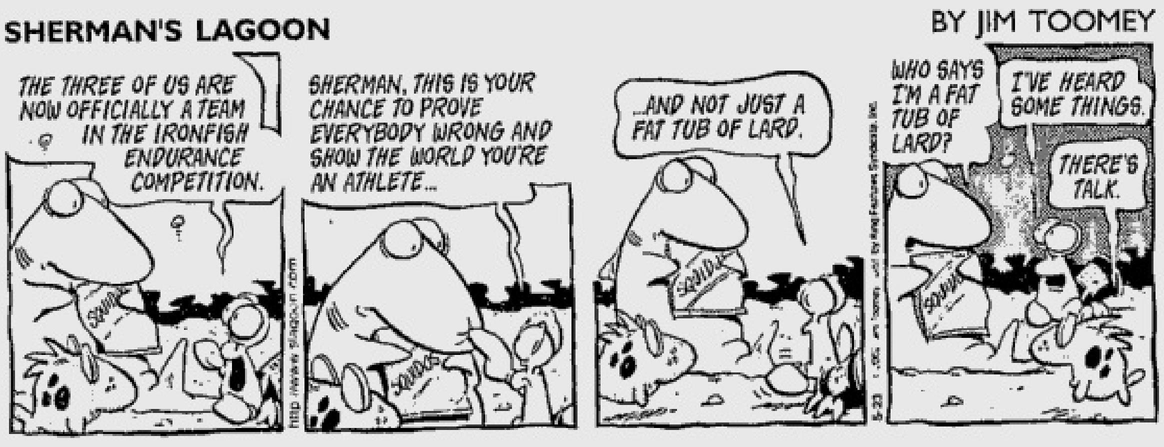
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, ButtKid! So what did the teacher say about me in her evaluation?
Eek! It's DAINTY GURL...
Well, she said the same thing about you. She said you were a nice girl.
NICE?!!
But I thought you were into sugar and spice and everything nice?
GAWD! Now I'm stereotyped!

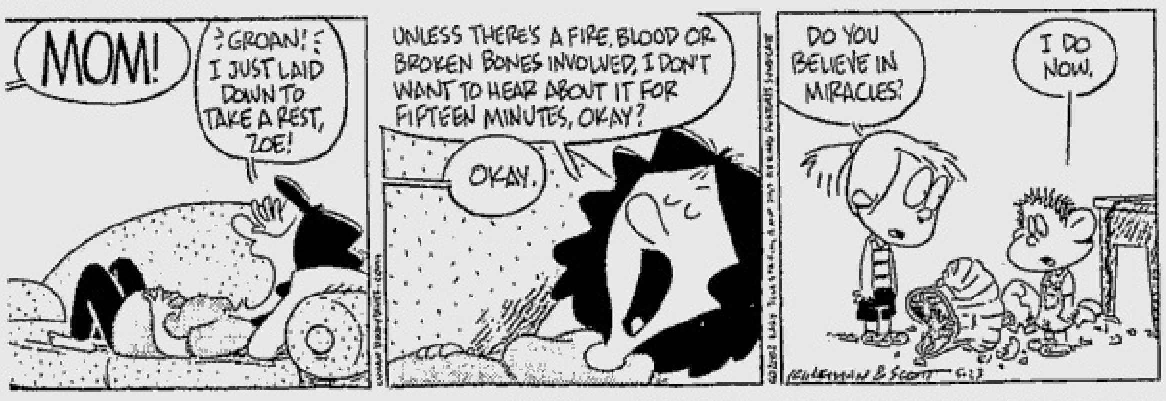
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


THE THREE OF US ARE NOW OFFICIALLY A TEAM IN THE IRONFISH ENDURANCE COMPETITION.
SHERMAN, THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE EVERYBODY WRONG AND SHOW THE WORLD YOU'RE AN ATHLETE...
...AND NOT JUST A FAT TUB OF LARD.
WHO SAYS I'M A FAT TUB OF LARD?
I'VE HEARD SOME THINGS.
THERE'S TALK.

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM!
GROAN! I JUST LAID DOWN TO TAKE A REST, ZOE!
UNLESS THERE'S A FIRE, BLOOD OR BROKEN BONES INVOLVED, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES, OKAY?
OKAY.
DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?
I DO NOW.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT 5-23

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Joan Collins, Rosemary Clooney, Drew Carey

Happy Birthday: You will be lucky when it comes to investments, money and legal matters this year. Use your creative ideas to attract friends or lovers. Your aggressive action could easily lead to conflicts. Don't push your beliefs on others. Get involved in competitive sports and surround yourself with friends. Your numbers are 6, 18, 22, 34, 45, 48

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Avoid getting into any discussions today. Sudden changes, limitations or frustrations will develop when dealing with your partner. Get out with friends .

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your ability to get the job done will put you in high regard with your peers today. If you are feeling a little stressed out due to all the added responsibility, make plans to retire .

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You will have some terrific ideas today so be sure to put them on paper or incorporate them into whatever you are doing. Make plans to enjoy the company of friends.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Moneymaking ventures can be lucrative if they involve domestic services or products. Real estate deals could turn out to be very enticing. Don't go over budget.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will be attracted to individuals who can offer you an interesting perspective on life . Get involved in intellectual pursuits and you will find yourself in a leadership position.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You may be inclined to change your professional direction. Do a little investigation before you make a move. Your current situation may not be as bad as you think.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): This is not the day to confront a personal situation that has been troubling you. Instead, enjoy the company of good friends or get involved in something that you find interesting or creative.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may want to keep things to yourself today. Confiding in friends or relatives may lead to upset and interference. Don't jump to conclusions or react harshly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You'll be the center of attention if you get involved in a worthwhile group. The more you do in order to find solutions to existing problems, the more respect you'll gain from your peers.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Things are not likely to go according to plan. Someone you are doing business with may not be straight with you. Your ideas are good but don't share them yet.

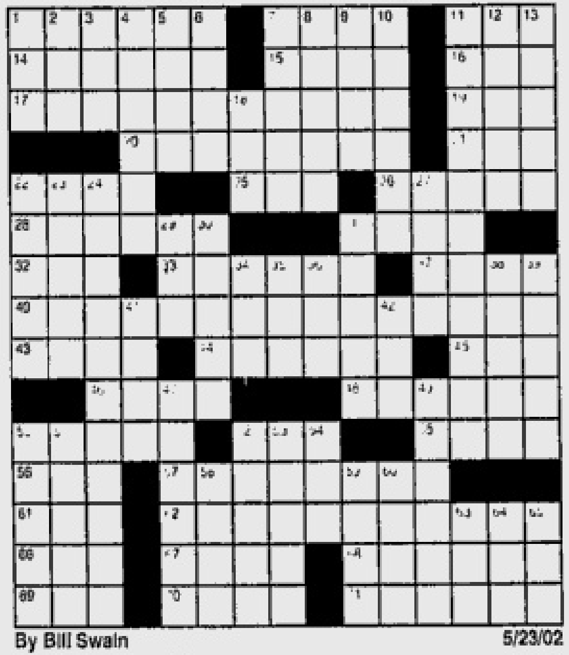
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Make sure that you get out with friends who can offer you mental stimulation or join a group that you find challenging. You should realize your goals after talking to someone who has experience in your chosen field.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You may feel the need to take care of matters for someone else today. Don't get in too deep. You have your own paperwork to complete and if you are too quick to offer your time to others you may have to work late.

Birthday Baby: You will need freedom to come and go as you please. You will want to live with all the modern conveniences. You will need change in order to stimulate your creative expression.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Bill Swain
New Port Richey, FL
5/23/02

ACROSS
1 Winter coat
7 LSD, for short
11 Eng. channel
14 Musical composition
15 Stable female
16 Egt.-Syr., once
17 Julia Roberts movie
19 Seventh Greek letter
20 Privately
21 Whippoorwill bill
22 Joyride
25 Plaything
26 Lucas folk
28 With 40A, song featured in 17A
31 Fruity drinks
32 Devon river
33 Dogpatch creator
37 Perfect report card
40 See 28A
43 Office pers.
44 Royalty fur
45 Long, narrow inlet
46 Commotions
48 Artists who recorded 28A
50 Cod and Ann
52 Poorly lit
55 Oh yeah, right
56 End of a spat?
57 Product sticker
61 Chest bone
62 Co-star in 17A
66 Kilmer of "The Doors"
67 External: pref.
68 Ford of fashion
69 Language suffix
70 Solar period
71 Strengthens

DOWN
1 Viper
2 And also not
3 First grade
4 Poll figure
5 Ltr. directive
6 Kyser and Medford
7 Exxon rival
8 Toyota model
9 "Dies __"
10 Pockmarked
11 City on the Rio de la Plata
12 Dyeing technique
13 Grumpy characters
18 Drenched
22 Distorts
23 Sprite
24 Bound to happen
27 Diluted
29 Big galoot
30 Chimney ducts
31 Imitating
34 Calculator key abbr.
35 $ dispenser
36 Upsilon's follower
38 Umbel family plant
39 Striped gem
41 London park
42 Modernist's prefix
47 Fish hawk
49 Squirm
50 Breaking ball
51 Wanted-poster word
52 Judgments
53 Blood of the gods
54 __ culpa
58 School in Houston
59 Very in Versailles
60 Mine entranceway
63 Shoe-box letters
64 Fam. reunion attendee
65 Two in nine?

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	R	O	M	■	I	N	C	H	■	D	A	S	H
A	V	I	S	O	■	S	O	R	E	■	E	L	K	O
G	E	N	E	R	A	L	B	E	N	J	A	M	I	N
E	R	S	■	S	T	E	E	D	■	E	L	A	T	E
S	T	E	R	E	O	■	L	O	O	S	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	L	P	S	■	■	S	T	R	A	I	N
A	M	E	N	■	■	O	R	A	L	E	■	M	R	I
S	A	V	I	N	G	M	A	J	O	R	R	Y	A	N
P	G	A	■	E	L	E	N	A	■	■	E	S	N	E
S	I	N	G	L	E	■	■	R	S	V	P	■	■	■
■	■	■	I	S	E	R	E	■	M	E	S	S	E	S
A	M	I	G	O	■	O	D	D	E	R	■	A	M	I
C	O	L	O	N	E	L	N	E	W	M	A	N	M	D
T	I	L	L	■	D	E	A	N	■	I	D	E	A	L
A	L	S	O	■	A	S	S	T	■	N	O	R	S	E

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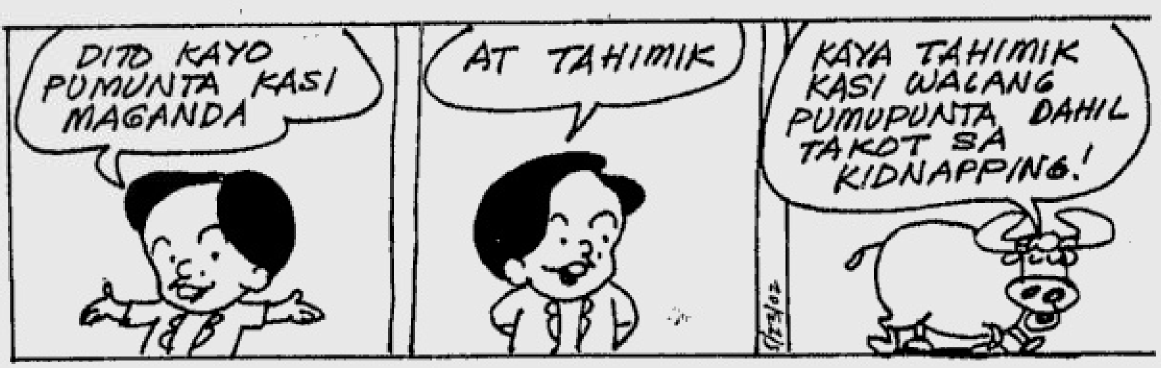
5/23/02

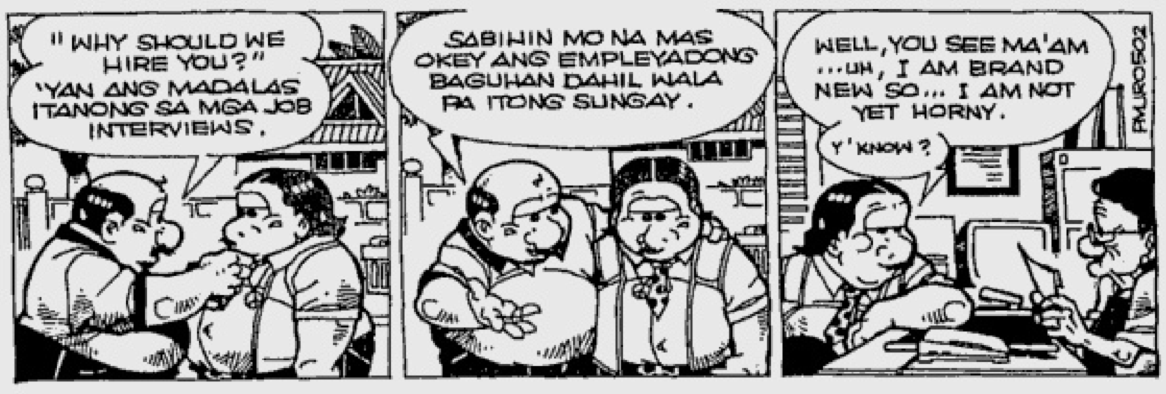
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


DITO KAYO PUMUNTA KASI MAGANDA
AT TAHIMIK
KAYA TAHIMIK KASI WALANG PUMUPUNTA DAHIL TAKOT SA KIDNAPPING!

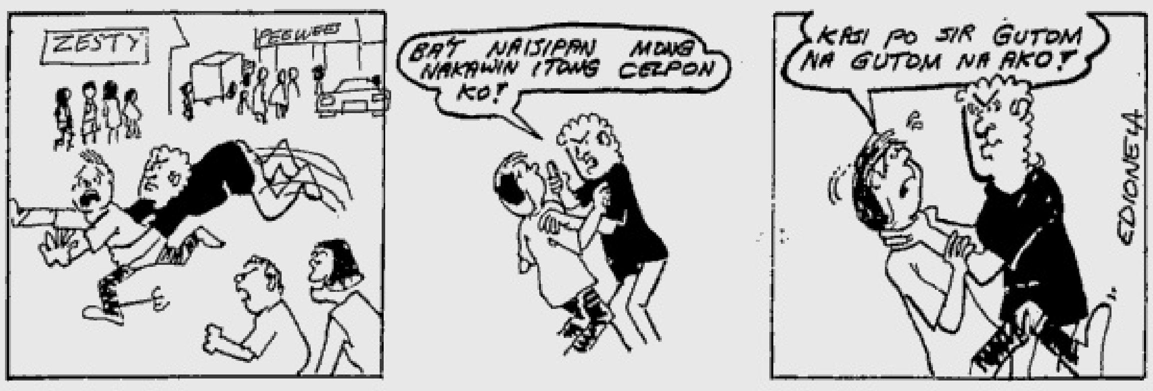
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


"WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU?" 'YAN ANG MADALAS ITANONG SA MGA JOB INTERVIEWS.
SABIHIN MO NA MAS OKEY ANG EMPLEYADONG BAGUHAN DAHIL WALA PA ITONG SUNGAY.
WELL, YOU SEE MA'AM ...UH, I AM BRAND NEW SO... I AM NOT YET HORNY.
Y'KNOW?
PMJR0502

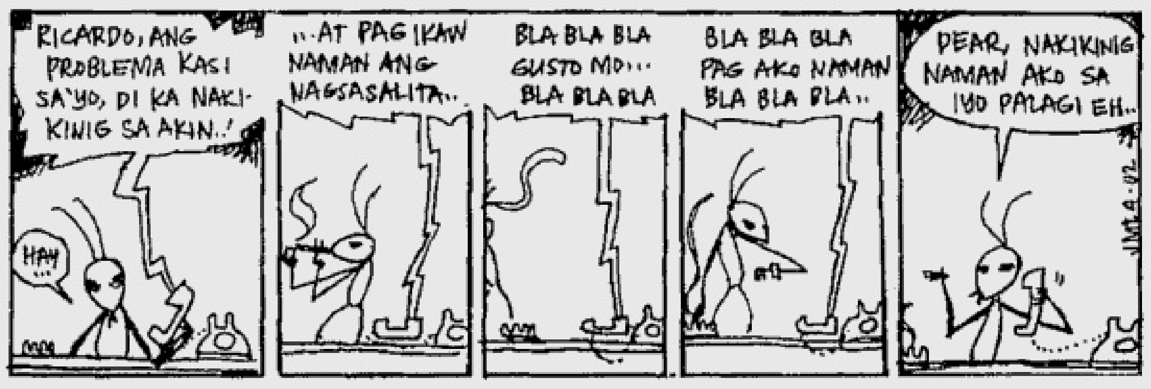
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


ZESTY
PEEWEES
BA'T NAISIPAN MONG NAKAWIN ITONG CELPON KO?
KASI PO SIR GUTOM NA GUTOM NA AKO!
EDIONELA

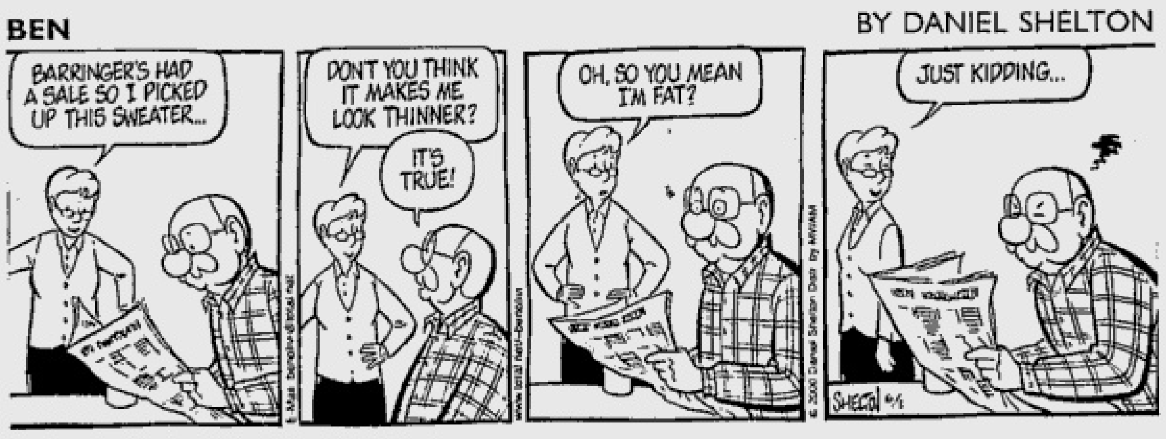
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


RICARDO, ANG PROBLEMA KASI SA'YO, DI KA NAKIKINIG SA AKIN..!
HAY...
...AT PAG IKAW NAMAN ANG NAGSASALITA..
BLA BLA BLA GUSTO MO... BLA BLA BLA
BLA BLA BLA PAG AKO NAMAN BLA BLA BLA..
DEAR, NAKIKINIG NAMAN AKO SA IYO PALAGI EH..

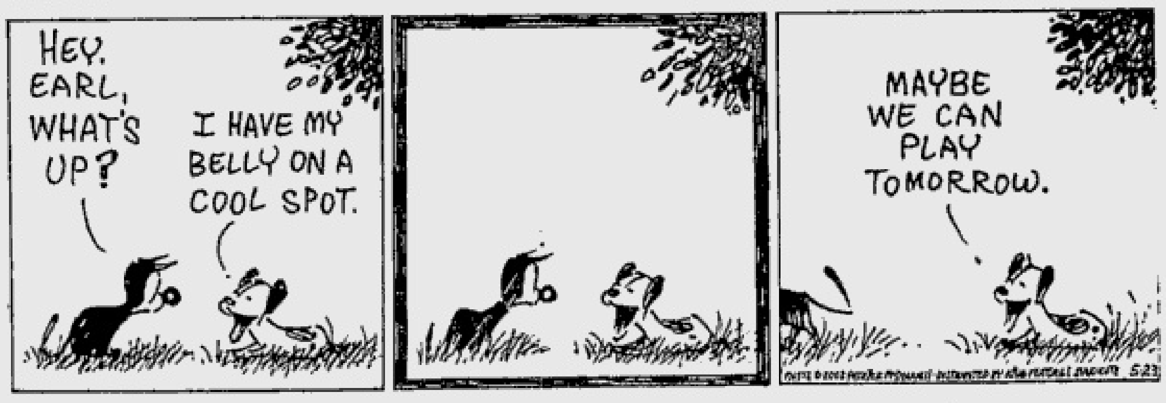
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


BARRINGER'S HAD A SALE SO I PICKED UP THIS SWEATER...
DON'T YOU THINK IT MAKES ME LOOK THINNER?
IT'S TRUE!
OH, SO YOU MEAN I'M FAT?
JUST KIDDING...
SHELTON

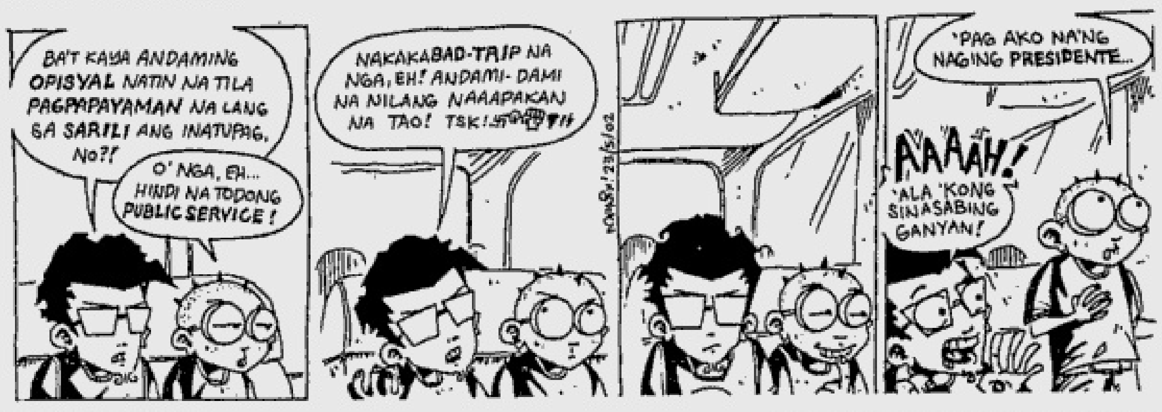
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HEY, EARL, WHAT'S UP?
I HAVE MY BELLY ON A COOL SPOT.
MAYBE WE CAN PLAY TOMORROW.
5.23

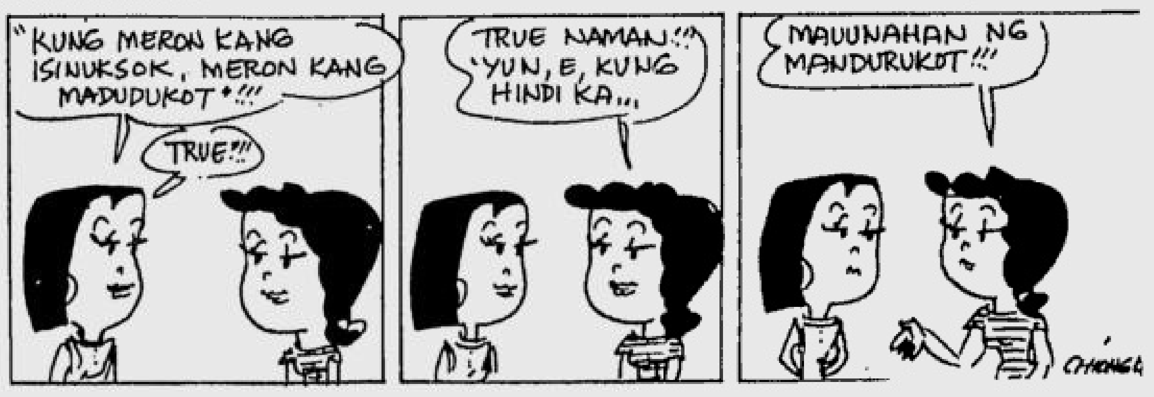
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


BA'T KAYA ANDAMING OPISYAL NATIN NA TILA PAGPAPAYAMAN NA LANG SA SARILI ANG INATUPAG, NO?!
O' NGA, EH... HINDI NA TODONG PUBLIC SERVICE!
NAKAKABAD-TRIP NA NGA, EH! ANDAMI-DAMI NA NILANG NAAAPAKAN NA TAO! TSK!
'PAG AKO NA'NG NAGING PRESIDENTE...
AAAAH!
'ALA 'KONG SINASABING GANYAN!
23/5/02

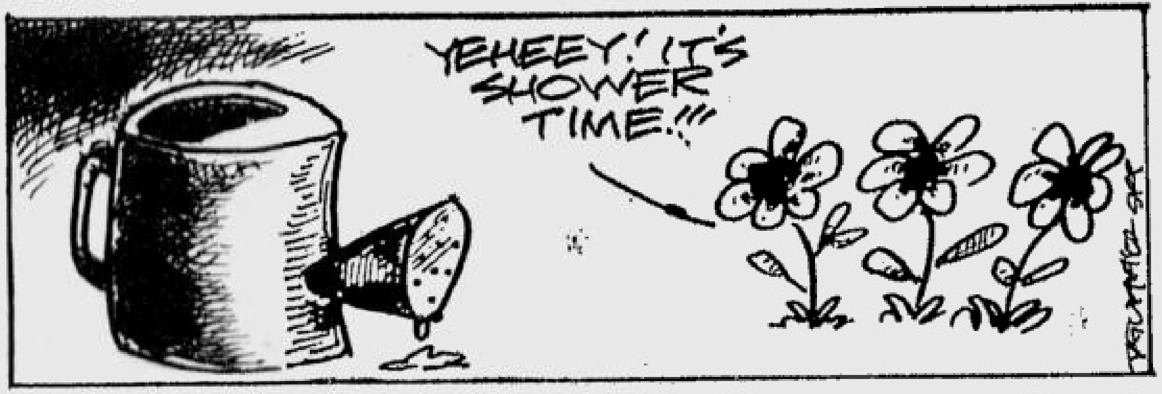
LOVEKNOTS

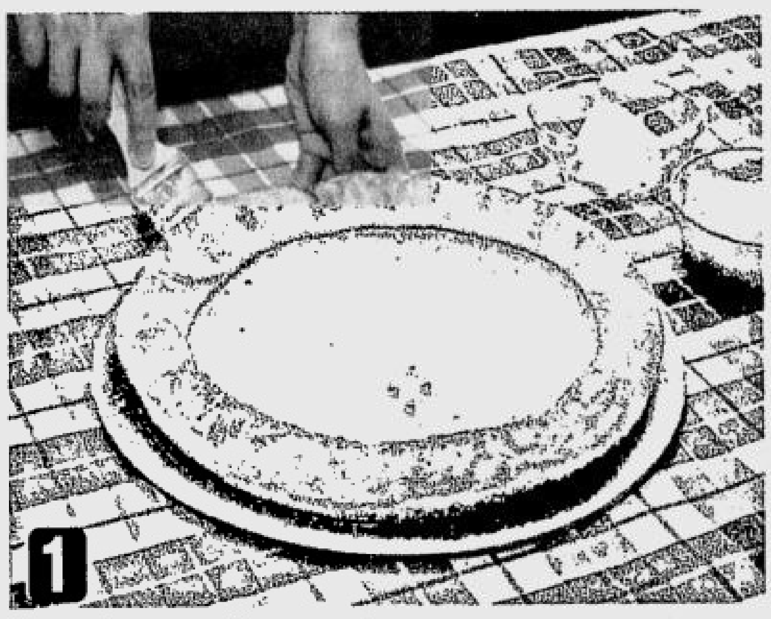
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


"KUNG MERON KANG ISINUKSOK, MERON KANG MADUDUKOT"!!!
TRUE!!!
TRUE NAMAN!!! 'YUN, E, KUNG HINDI KA...
MAUUNAHAN NG MANDURUKOT!!!
CHIONGLO

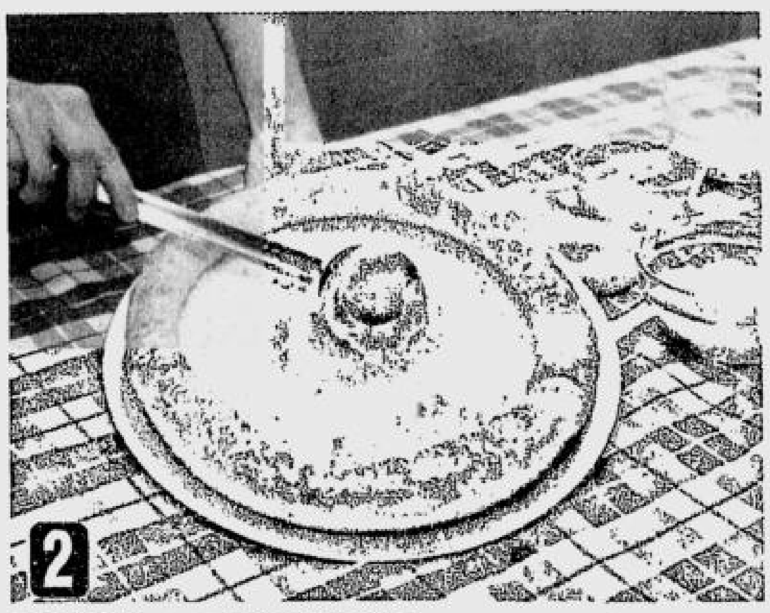
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

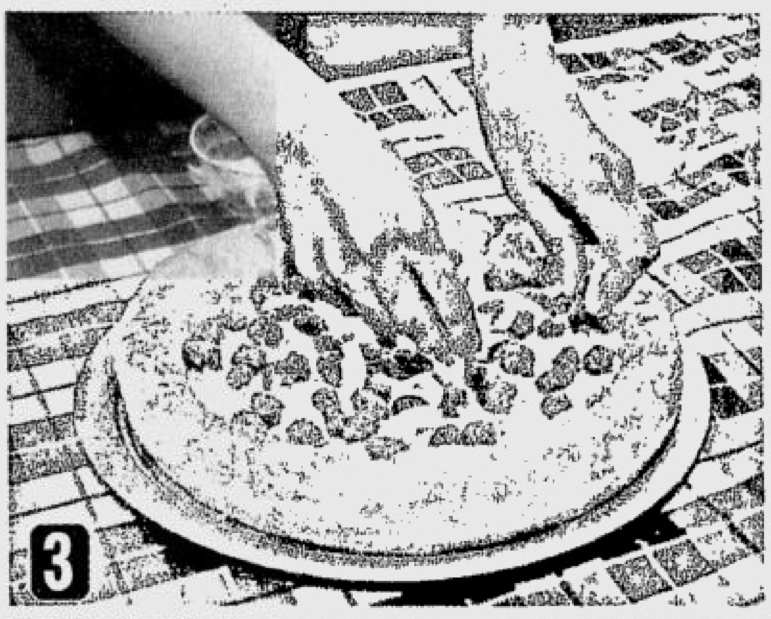

YEHEEY! IT'S SHOWER TIME!!!



1 **BRUSH** butter on the outer edge.



2 **SPREAD** Thousand Island dressing.



3 **TOSS** in liberally cheese on the bottom, pre-formed beef, second layer of cheese and onion strips.

How to make cheeseburger à la Shakey's

From page C1

Pizza, a combination of meat, vegetables and pineapple tidbits; Shakey's Special, a medley of meat and veggies; Garden Pizza, for the vegan and health conscious; Hawaiian Delight, a duo of pineapple and ham; and Pepperoni, for people who relish the spice of this popular Italian sausage.

Another original

The seventh and latest addition to Super Pan Pizza's constellation of flavors is another original, the Cheeseburger Super Pan Pizza. But why cheeseburger?

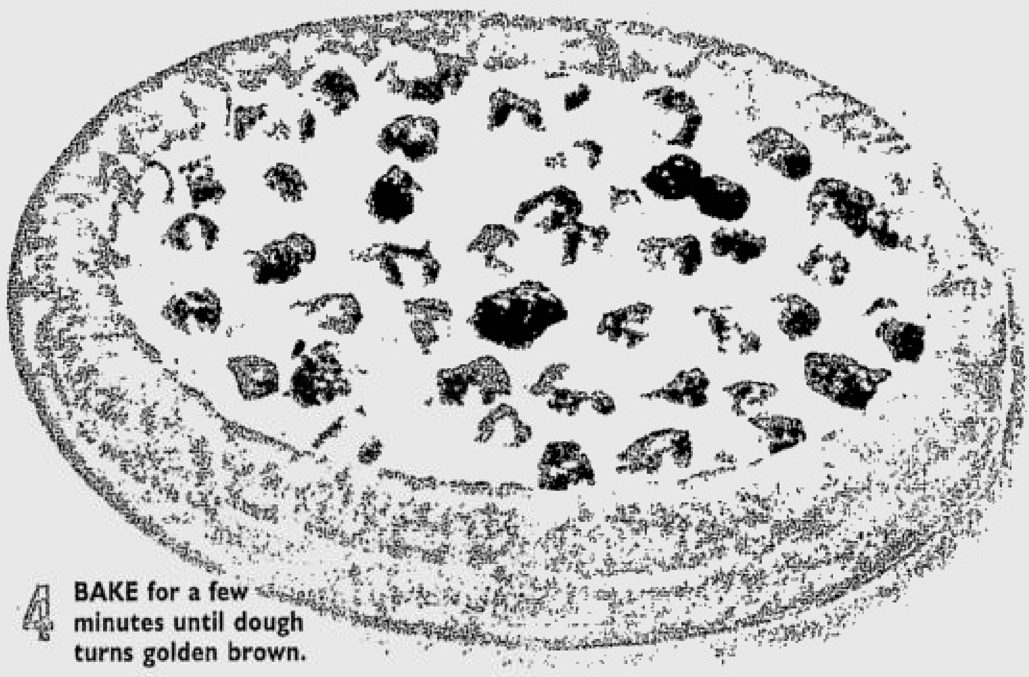
"Filipinos, our market studies show, love burgers and consequently frequent burger chains. So we innovated a common product into something new," Jara says. In this case, Shakey's melds the characteristic taste of cheeseburger, a common product, into the pizza. The recipe is simple, really, as the ingredients used are typically found in cheeseburgers—cheese, beef, onion, tomatoes, dressing and lettuce.

"We had about three to four different versions—in a period of more than six months—of the Cheeseburger Super Pan Pizza before we were able to come up with this," says Barrameda. "Little by little we did away with the unnecessary toppings and finally decided to stick with the basic cheeseburger ingredients. With this recipe, anybody can do a cheeseburger pizza at home."

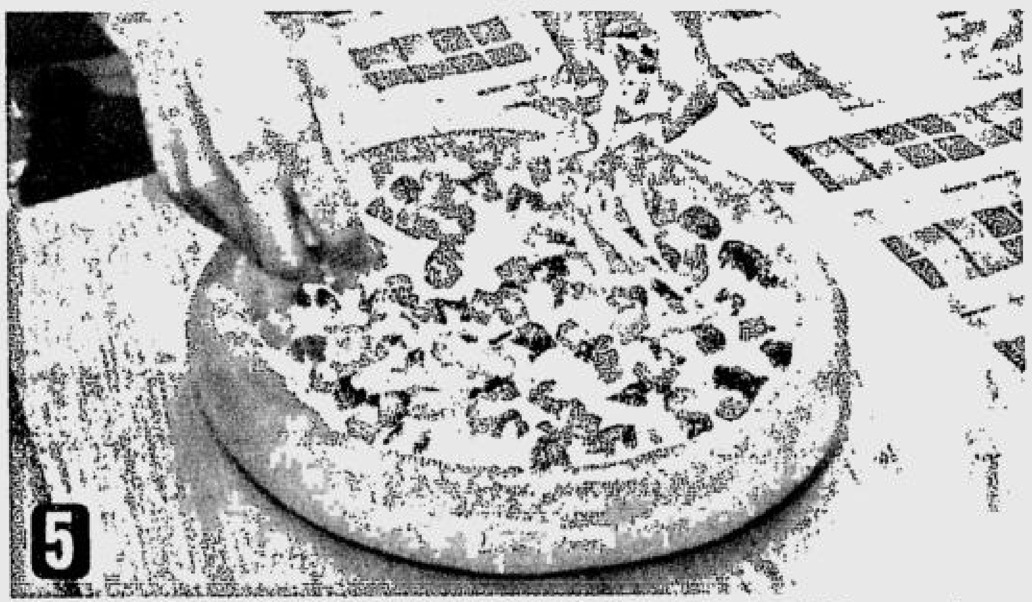
But the icing on the cake, so to speak, the real deal in any pizza that wants to make its mark, is Shakey's' uniquely delicious and filling dough. Don't expect anyone else to come up with a recipe like it anytime soon.

E-mail the author at splat_blag@excite.com

> From the belly buster to its take on the cheeseburger, the new Shakey's pan pizza is doing very well, thank you



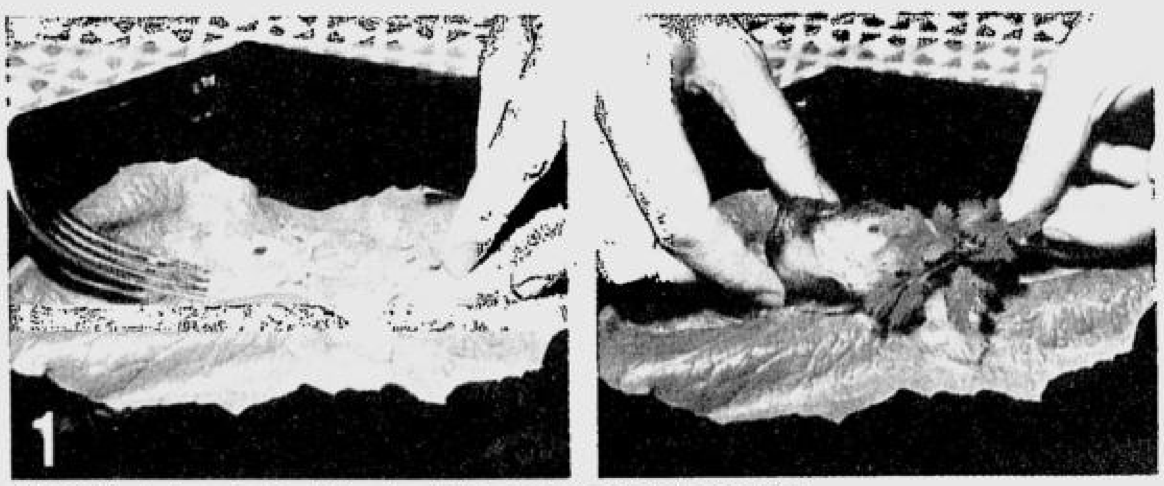
4 **BAKE** for a few minutes until dough turns golden brown.



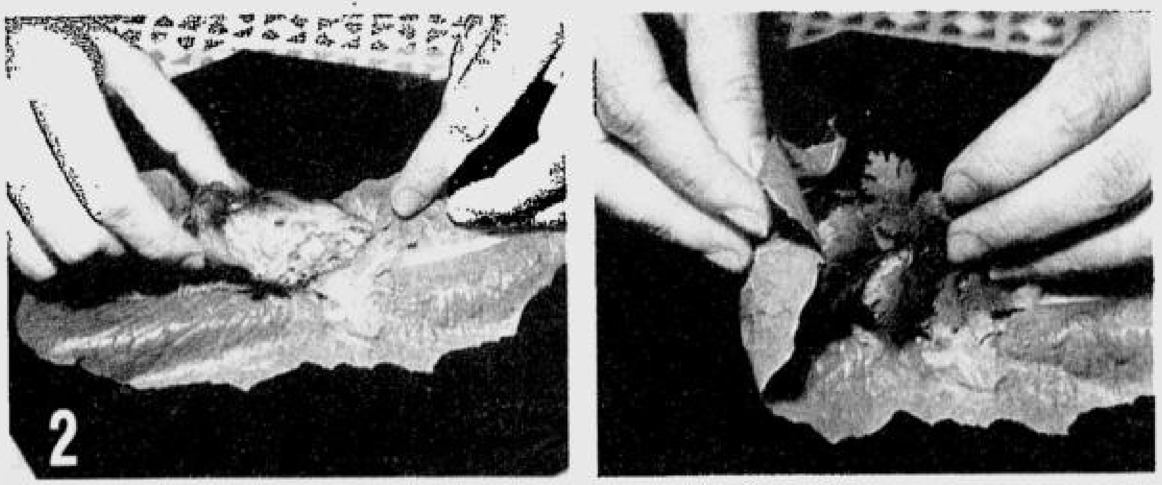
5 **ADD** a second coating of butter on the outer rim and heap tomatoes and shredded lettuce on top, then drizzle more of the Thousand Island dressing.

6 **SLICE** the pizza into equal parts.

CAPT. Shakey's with Shakey's Phils. GM Mimi Jara and QAR&D manager Josie Barrameda show off the new Cheeseburger Super Pan Pizza.



1 **CHOOSE** a lettuce leaf and line it with the radish and carrot pickles.



2 **PLACE** spring roll on top of pickles and coriander.

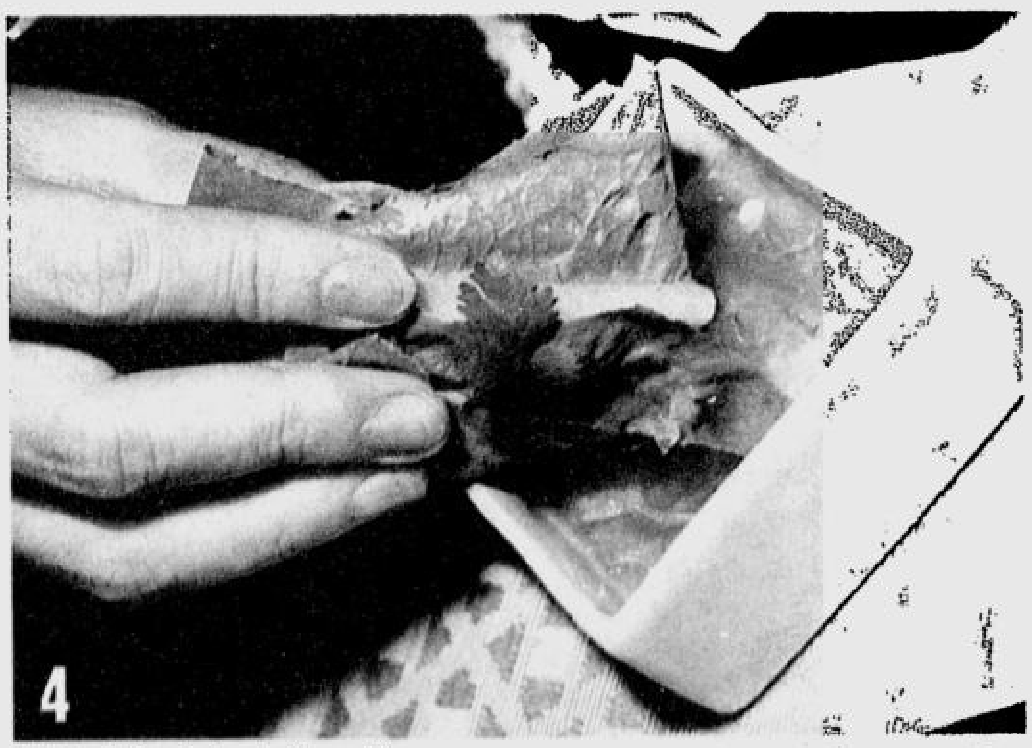
Play this roll the right way

FOR OVER A YEAR now, Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant at Dusit Hotel Nikko (tel. 867-3333 local 3354), the first fine dining restaurant that offers extraordinary Vietnamese cuisine in a five-star hotel, has been serving healthy and exquisite dishes. Thien Duong, which means paradise, features a unique fusion of Asian, Vietnamese and French cuisine that will surely delight the eye as well as the palate.

At Thien Duong, vegetables, not to mention noodles, fish and meat dishes, are important. A bowl of such garden varieties as lettuce, basil leaves, mint, coriander leaves and Romaine cabbages, is served throughout the meal with their favorite dip—the radish and carrot pickles. Vegetables are often served raw to act as a fresh contrast to the spicy cooked dishes. The distinct flavors of Vietnamese food come from mint leaves, coriander, lemon grass, basil, ginger, black pepper, rice vinegar, shrimp and fish sauces, star anise, sugar and green onions. Marinated meat or fish is quickly sautéed and served immediately and may be eaten over rice or rolled in lettuce leaf (or both) then dipped in the pungent sauce. At Thien Duong, these vegetables, sauces and *atchara* are served continuously and are for free.

When you dine at Thien Duong, amaze everyone by enjoying spring rolls the Vietnamese way. Follow this easy step-by-step guide.

3 **WRAP** spring roll with lettuce leaf.



4 **DIP** in pickles before taking a bite.

A FRENCH villa

PHOTOS BY CLINTON PALANCA

A classic and feverish family vacation

THE MAD TEA PARTY

Clinton Palanca

IT was an unexpectedly early spring in Paris when my parents arrived; the plan was to head down to the south of France by train, rent a car, and then make our way around Provençe and Italy, stopping at little country inns for good food and cheap lodgings. This sounded good when we planned it over telephone, but France is one of those places where nothing is quite as straightforward as it could be. Admittedly, the same could be said about our own country; but the difference is that here you expect everything to go wrong, while France gives the illusion that things are simple when they actually aren't.

Quite impulsively, I had made reservations at the Villa Gallici, only because I knew it was near La Clos de la Violette, where I wanted to dine that night. My parents were as underwhelmed as I had previously been by the Cours Mirabeau, touted as the most beautiful avenue in France, and the overpriced café Les Deux Garcons. But dinner at La Clos de la Violette was excellent: although it held two Michelin stars, it didn't have the stuffy air of similarly rated Paris establishments; and the food, which featured startling combinations of aquatic and terrestrial meats (molten-soft scallops wrapped in crisp bacon, for instance) was inspired and reasonably priced. Back at the hotel, we huddled for a family conference. In the bonhomie of having had a good meal and the charm of the hotel, we hit upon a solution; or rather, it presented itself to us in the form the Relais & Chateaux guidebook, which was lying on the table.

> In the bonhomie of having had a good meal and the charm of the hotel, we hit upon a solution—the Relais & Chateaux guidebook

A CLASSIC/ p.C2

HenySison

THE ESSENTIAL COOKING SERIES
(June 20 - August 2, 2002)

Have you dreamed of a career in the culinary arts? Are you a restaurant or home cook who has always desired a thorough understanding of the fundamentals? The Essential Cooking Series is here to make your dream come true.

The Essential Cooking Series is our new and innovative way of teaching the basic of cooking and baking. We don't just teach you recipes, we will teach you how to cook, bake and decorate.

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The 20-day hands-on Essential Cooking Series classes cover topics such as stocks, broths, classic white & brown sauces, breads, cakes, pastries, basic cake decorating, chocolates, soufflés and many more. Techniques to be taught include braising, steaming, poaching, boiling, grilling, broiling, roasting, frying & sautéing.

Classes begin on **June 20, 2002 and ends on August 2, 2002.** Classes are held every Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10AM to 4PM. Sign up now to secure your spot as the class size in limited to **16 students** only and fill up quickly. Tuition fee includes ingredients, manual, aprons, chef's jacket and chef's kit. For more information call Lirio at tel. #: 726-5316 / 412-7792.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

June 3 (Monday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,500 BAKING WORKSHOP FOR BEGINNERS I by: Heny Sison, *Learn the basics of baking with supervision from start to finish. Recipes: Chiffon Cake and its variations with Boiled Icing, Butter Cupcakes, Apple Pie with Streusel Topping, Fudgy Brownies, Chocolate Crinkles and Angel Cake. **Bring an apron.**

June 4 (Tuesday) 9:00-5:00 p.m. P1,700 PARADE OF PIES, TARTS & CHEESECAKES by: Heny Sison *French Apple Pie with Streusel Topping and Crème Anglaise Sauce, Turtle Pie, Banana Cream Pie with Whipped Cream and Caramel Topping, Mango Tart, Peach Walnut Pie, Blueberry Cheesecake and White Chocolate Cheesecake.

June 5 (Wednesday) 9:304:00 p.m. P2,000 BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS by: Glenn Remorca, floral designer * Learn the theories, styles, trends, techniques, sourcing, flower care and maintenance, basic forms, arrangements and flower for weddings. **Lecture, demonstration and hands-on production. Bring a pair of scissors.**

June 6 (Thursday) 9:00-1:00 p.m. P1,500 COOKIES FOR COFFEE by: Heny Sison, *Chunky Chewy White Choco Macadamia Cookies, Espresso Biscotti, Chocolate Chip Biscotti, Greek Cookies and Almond Wafer

June 6 (Thursday) 1:30-5:00 p.m. P1,700 FATHER'S DAY FEAST by: Aileen Anastacio, owner of C'est Si Bon and Goodies N' Sweets, graduate of culinary at the California Culinary Academy *Mixed Greens and Boiled Potatoes w/ Anchovy & Caper Dressing, Fettuccine w/ Wild Mushroom and Sage, Pan Grilled Rib Eye w/ Red Wine and Green Peppercorn Sauce, Seared Lapu-Lapu w/ Parsley Pesto, Caramelized Shallots, Herbed Carrots, Mashed Potatoes w/ Cheese and Turtle Coupe

June 7 (Friday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P1,500 CHOCOLATE ARTISTRY (Basic and Advanced) by: Heny Sison, *Professional techniques for creating fabulous candies from molded treats to truffles. Learn how to temper, flavor and color chocolates. Learn how to make chocolate lollipops, 3-D hollow molded chocolates, chocolate house and hand molded rose made out of chocolate icing. Packaging ideas will be shown in the class.

June 8 (Saturday) 9:30-5:00 p.m. P2,500 PIZZA CLASS by: Chef Giorgio Buccilarelli, Master Pizzaiolo & Barista, Food Consultant of various Italian restaurants all over Metro Manila, graduated at Culinary Institute, Milan Italy *In this class you will learn the history, concept and design of pizza making. Learn how to make pizza dough, tomato base sauce, white sauce base, preparation, setting up pizza counter, know the ingredients and toppings. **Recipes:** Margherita, Napoli Classica, 4 Formaggi Pizza Vegetariana, La Gibiana, Piccantina, 4 Stagioni, Calzone & Frutti di Mare. **Demonstration with student participation.**

June 10-11 (Monday-Tuesday) 9:00-5:00 p.m. P4,000 CAKE DECORATING COURSE 1 by: Heny Sison * Learn the basic of cake decorating: icings, color, star, shell, dots and outline borders; the rose, figure piping: clown & booties. You'll bake and decorate a character birthday cake. **Full participation.**

June 13 (Thursday) 9:00-12:30 p.m. P1,500 MUFFINS & SCONES by Heny Sison * Banana Nut Muffins, Chocolate Chip Muffins, Apple Pecan Muffins, Blueberry Ginger Muffins, Apricot Raisin Scones & Traditional Sweet Scones

June 13 (Thursday) 1:30-5:00 p.m. P1,200 COFFEE! COFFEE! COFFEE! by: Aileen Anastacio * If you are planning to open a coffee shop this course is for you. Learn the four fundamentals of coffee brewing, home espresso, guide to steaming & foaming. Recipes: Caffé Latte, Caffé Mocha, Caffé Americano, Cappuccino, Espresso Macchiato and Espresso con Panna. Make fun toppings and garnishes and master the art of coffee making.

June 14 (Friday) 9:00-5:00 p.m. P2,500 BREAD BAKING BASICS: A Workshop by: Heny Sison *This hands-on workshop is for the passionate bread baker! You will work with yeasted breads and expect to master the techniques of bread baking. Recipes include: Ensaymada, Pan de Sal, Pan Americano, Spanish Bread, Cheeserolls, French Bread & Bread Sticks

June 15 (Saturday) 9:30-5:00 p.m. P2,500 FRESH PASTA by: Chef Giorgio Buccilarelli *There is simply no comparison between homemade hand-formed pasta and the store bought stuff. Homemade is not only tastier but a lot easier to make than you think. Learn how to make pasta egg dough, green spinach dough, black pasta dough, different kinds of pastas: lasagna, green lasagna, ravioli, tortellini, cannelloni, fettuccine: green & black, stuffing's for ravioli, tortellini and cannelloni. Recipes: Lasagna alla Bolognese, Lasagna al 4 Formaggi, Lasagna al Pesto, Cannelloni alla Ricotta and Spinach, Ravioli alla Boscaiola al Burro e Salvia, Tortellini al 4 Formaggi, alla Panna Prosciutto e Funghi, Green Fettuccine alla Montanara, Black Fettuccini al Frutti di Mare. **Demonstration with student participation.**

June 17 (Monday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P2,000 PATTIES & TURNOVERS (Demo-Participation) by: Jill Sandique Chef / Food Consultant & Food Stylist, Blue Ribbon graduate of Peter Kump's New York Cooking School *Indian Samosas, Jamaican Beef Patties, Cuban Empanada, Chicken Mushroom Turnover & Stromboli plus bonus recipe.

June 18 (Tuesday) 9:30-4:30 p.m. P1,700 HEARTY SOUPS & CASSEROLES by: Jill Sandique * Fish Stew with Aioli and Rouille, Cassoulet, Choucroute Garnie, Manhattan Clam Chowder, Chili Con Carne and Bouillabaisse

June 19 (Wednesday) 9:00-12:30 p.m. P1,500 CAKE ART SPECIALTIES I by: Jill Sandique * Big Jacks, Mango Bars, Glazed Dark Chocolate Cake with Caramel Sauce, Pavlova, Pecan Pie Bars and Chocolate Silk.

June 19 (Wednesday) 1:30-5:00 p.m. P1,200 DESSERT COFFEES by: Aileen Anastacio * Learn how to make a variety of iced coffee drinks; a whole new category of ways to enjoy espresso. **Recipes:** Almond Coffee Freeze, Icy Rum Coffee Cream, Toffee Coffee, Mudslide Malt, Mocha Rumba, Rocky Road, Mocha Malt and more!

June 24-25 (Monday-Tuesday) 9:00-4:00 p.m. P3,700 CAKE DECORATING COURSE II by: Heny Sison *Add amazing new skills to your cake decorating - the world of icing flowers, distinctive borders, flower sprays and specialty flowers. As a final project you will decorate a basketweave cake filled with cascading flowers. **Full participation.**

June 26 (Monday) 9:30-4:00 p.m. P1,500 DESSERTS II by: Jill Sandique * Almond Brittle Torte, Lemon Poppyseed Cake, Chocolate Hazelnut Gateau, Irish Cream Mousse, Mango Miroir & Apple Bavarian

HENY SISON at Julius Maggi Kitchen, Nestle Bldg., # 31 Plaza Drive, Rockwell Center Makati City

June 8 (Saturday) 1:00-5:00 p.m. P1,500 BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS * Butter Cake with Butter Icing, Moist Chocolate Cake with Fudge Icing, Mocha Cake with No-Melt Butter Icing, Lemon Chiffon Cake with Boiled Icing & Sponge Cake with Whipped Cream Icing

June 17 (Monday) 1:00-5:00 p.m. P1,500 BROWNIES & BARS * Chewy Moist Brownies, Carrot Cake Bars with Cream Cheese Icing, Lemon Cheesecake Bars, Brownies with Caramel Center and Butterscotch Bars

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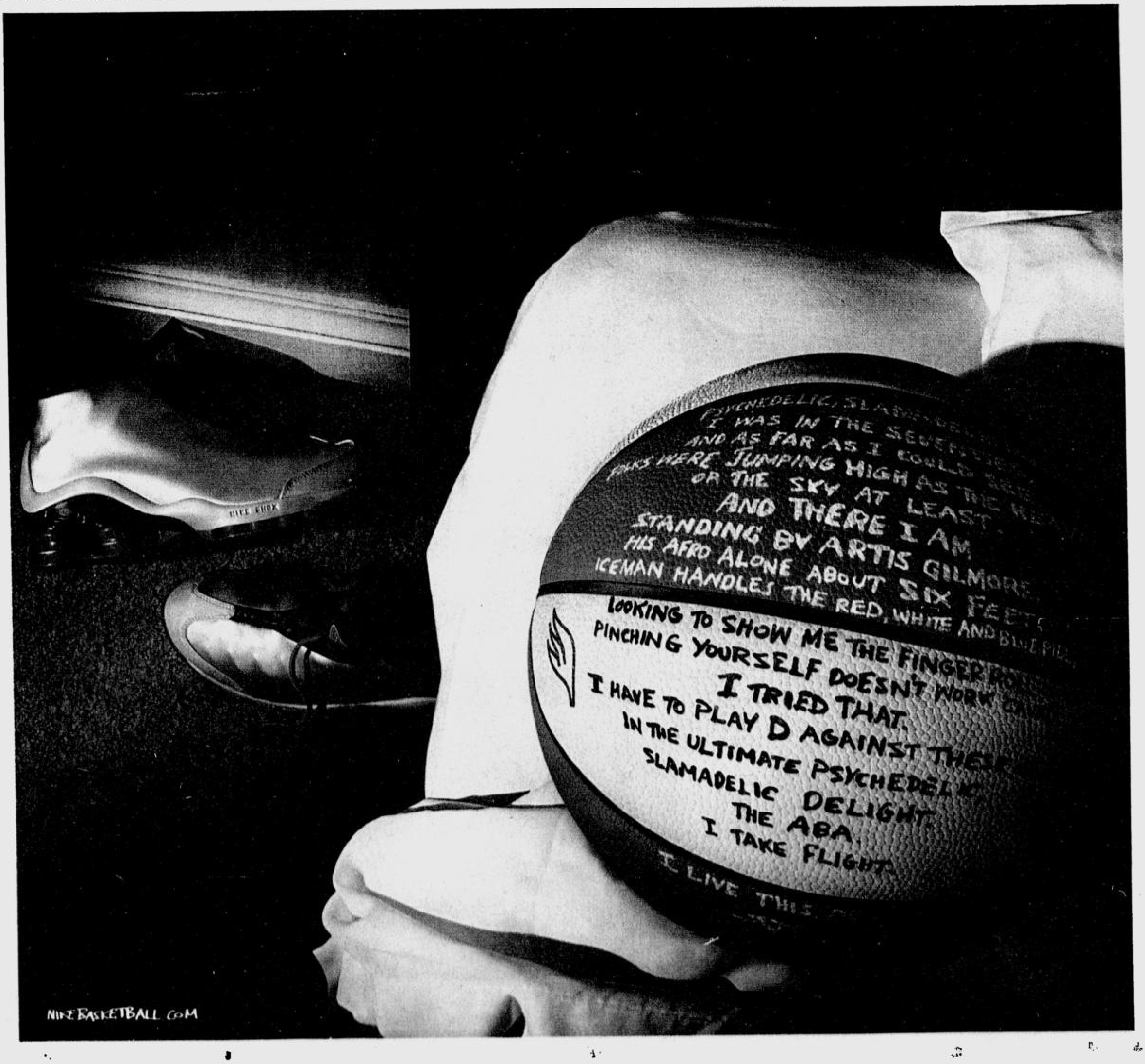
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PSYCHEDELIC, SLAMADE...
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AND AS FAR AS I COULD SEE
FOLKS WERE JUMPING HIGH AS THE ...
OR THE SKY AT LEAST
AND THERE I AM
STANDING BY ARTIS GILMORE
HIS AFRO ALONE ABOUT SIX FEET
ICEMAN HANDLES THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE PILL
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I TRIED THAT.
I HAVE TO PLAY D AGAINST THESE
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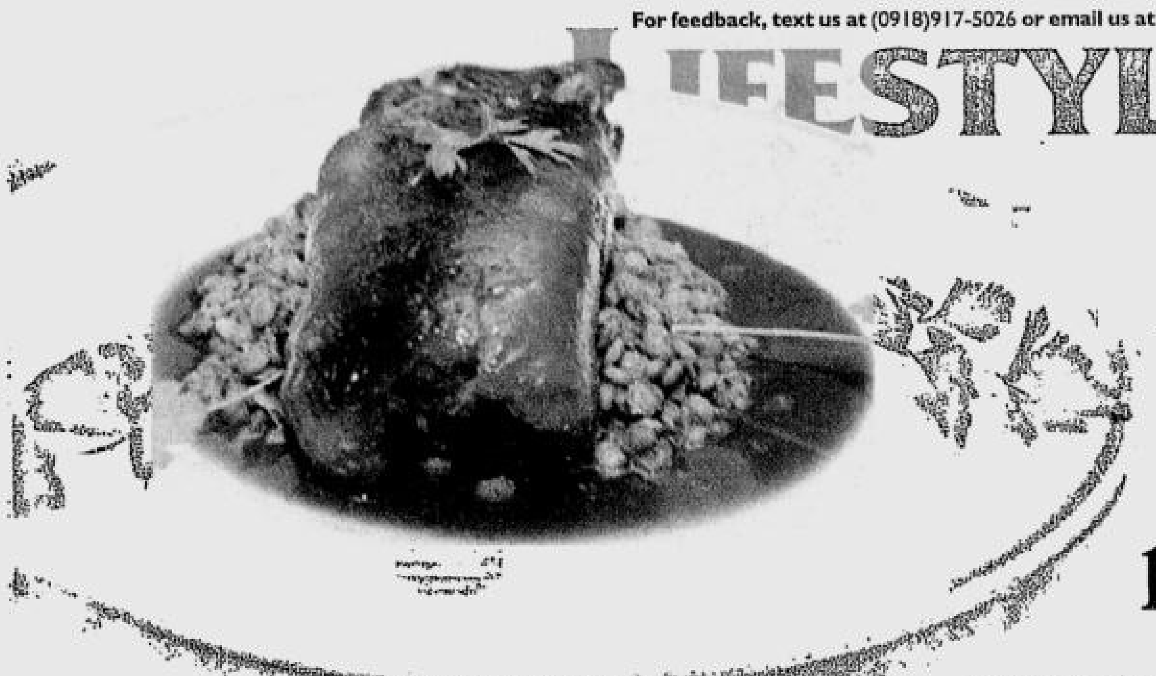

MUSHROOM-stuffed pig strutter with sautéed lentils

A happy mélange of French food, jazz music and shabby chic

By Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Jess Yuson

DO cream and *tapuey* mix? They certainly do in Salud, the newest bistro cum bar to open in Baguio that offers French cuisine with a Filipino twist. Located in Lourdes Subdivision near Baguio's famed Lourdes Grotto, Salud (tel. [074] 300-4408 and 0917-815-4055) is one of those out-of-the-way restaurants that's deliciously worth the trip.

Paul and Nina Poblador have gone to great lengths to come up with a diverse and tasty fare served in eclectic surroundings that have attracted a fair share of artists such as Kidlat Tahimik, BenCab and Romulo Galicano. Members of True Faith and Wolfgang have also sampled Paul's cooking since Salud formally opened a month ago.

Salud, which is Spanish for a wish for good health and long life, is also a tribute to Nina's late grandmother, Salud Tesoro. The energetic and creative Tesoro matriarch loved life and lived it to the fullest.

No greenhorn

This may be the newly married couple's first venture into the food business, but Paul is no greenhorn when it comes to the kitchen. The frustrated engineer had worked at the Aviary before training under Marcus Gfeller, then Gracci's executive chef. He then flew to the West Coast to study at the California Culinary Academy. The budding chef further honed his culinary skills at the Tivoli Grill in San Francisco.

"I'm into straight French cooking with a Pinoy twist," says Paul.

That Filipino touch with a distinctly northern flavor comes in his use of certain ingredients. Instead of white wine, a staple in French cooking, Paul uses *tapuey* or Ifugao rice wine to jazz up or marinate certain dishes. Not just any *tapuey* would do, mind you.

"I use only *tapuey babae,*" Paul says. He has skipped the sugar in flavoring the dishes since the milder variant is sweeter compared to the sour *tapuey lalake*. "We're also trying to promote healthy eating by using only canola or olive oil in our dishes."

He sometimes pairs balsamic vinegar with *sukang* Iloco as a base for his salad dressings. Crisp, leafy greens, of course, come from the Mountain Province, while fresh seafood are sourced daily from Dagupan. And let's not forget the *bagnet* and *longanisa* from Abra and the lamb from La Union.

No to fusion

"Not that I have anything against it," he says, "but I'm not into fusion cooking."

His seafood risotto, for instance, is made of *milagrosa* rice that sits on a thick saffron-based broth and is flavored with squid ink and Baguio-grown Italian spices such as parsley and cilantro. The dish is then topped with tender pieces of squid meat and mussel for added texture and flavor.

Don't let its dark appearance turn you off. The mushroom-stuffed pig strutter is divine, its melt-in-the-mouth goodness made more flavorful with sauce made from beef stock and thickened with lentils. And where does the Pinoy twist come in?

"Where else but in our love for *pata!*" says Paul with a hearty chuckle.

The pan-seared lime chicken on basil-laced rice pilaf is a decidedly lighter but not necessarily less scrumptious fare. Aside from lime, the chicken is seasoned with a rich and creamy combination of squash and carrot puree. East again meets West through Paul's deliberate use of Thai and Italian basil.

Certain herbs and spices, by the way, are grown in ordinary flowerpots that are within Paul and assistant chef Benjie's reach.

Paul, a music lover, is also on top of programming the music. Sorry, no heavy metal and Top 40 sounds. Music is limited mostly to jazz and standard tunes from the '40s, '50s and '60s. Paul sometimes finds himself playing Buddha Bar and rave music to a young crowd.

"Whatever the crowd is," he says, "the music is designed to relax them rather than compete with their conversation."

Apple green and fuchsia

Nina has converted a room into a "community couch" that screens recent and vintage VCDs of Filipino and American movies. At P175 per head, the package includes a specially prepared meal and iced tea.

Salud, of course, wouldn't have been complete without Nina's artsy touches. With a little help from mom Patis Tesoro, the graphic artist-turned-restaurateur has transformed one of the Tesoro family's summer homes into-

A HAPPY/ p.D2

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WARM raisin cake with apple compote

A happy mélange of French food, jazz music and shabby chic

Here's to life at Baguio's newest bistro-bar as it serves European cuisine with an Ilocano twist

From page D1

a mélange of South and Southeast Asian artistic influences.

"They call the look 'shabby chic'," says Nina. "Friends who've been to Salud say the place is like a Baguio branch of our home on Wilson Street in San Juan."

After the walls that divide the house had been knocked down, Nina and Patis had the beams painted in fuchsia and the jambs in apple green. The same colors were used in floral artworks that adorn the stair's baseboards. Similar potpourri-like splotches using different color combinations brighten up the restrooms.

"My mom was inspired by the idea of combining apple green and fuchsia from a porcelain plate she saw in a department store," says Nina. Rattan chairs, ceramic-topped tables and brass pin lights are among the remnants of the defunct Tesoro café in Manila. It's like Lola Salud hasn't left.

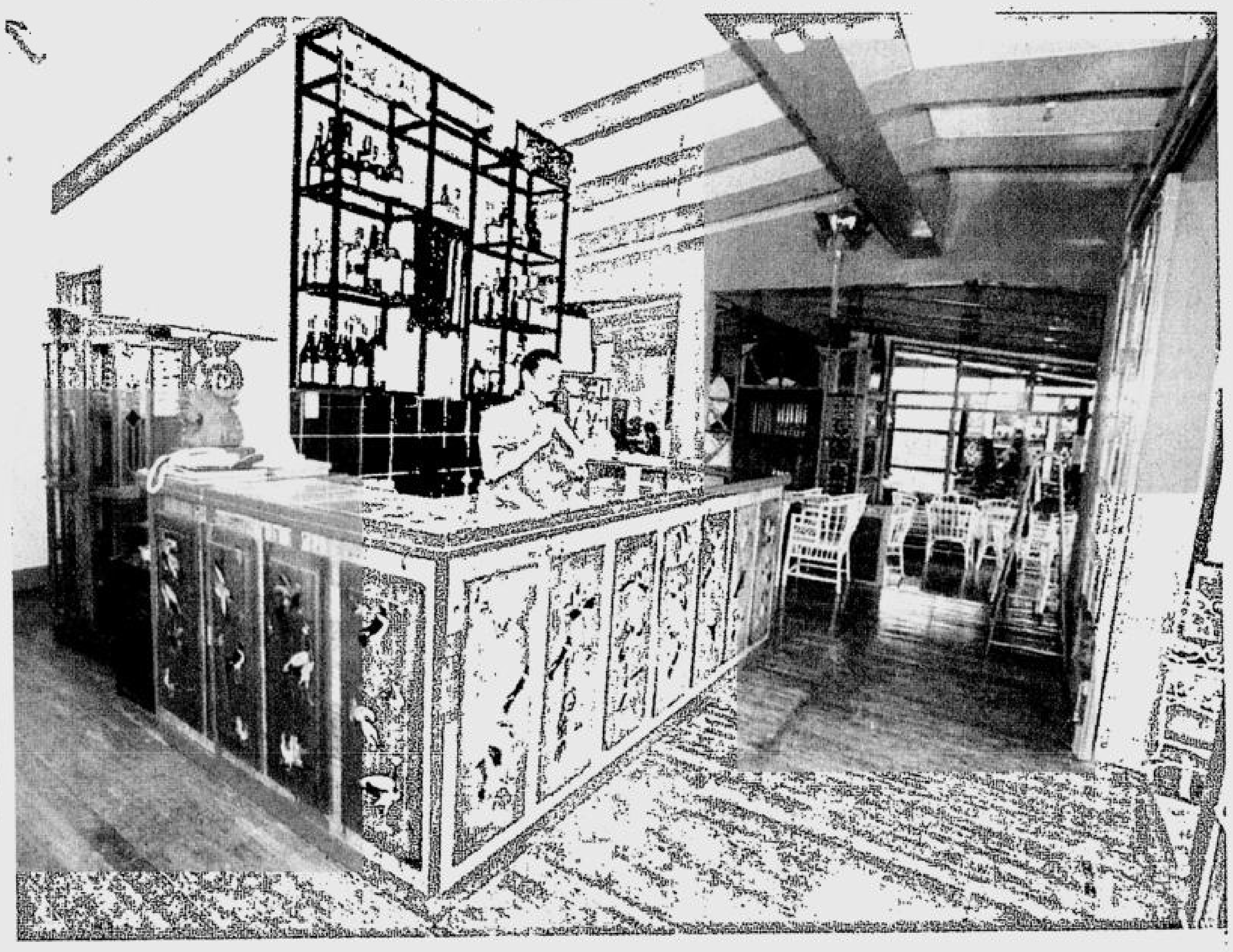
Asian touches extend to sari curtains that drape the window and several empty bird cages that dangle from the bar area's ceiling. Patis accented the bar's wooden panels with decoupage art using images of birds and old Chinese newspapers. She then sealed them with water-based clear varnish.

Aside from eclectic art, Salud also borrows from some of the region's diverse religions through images of Hindu, Buddhist and Christian deities. A stained glass panel leading to the kitchen features an image of Jesus Christ, while a stone statue of Kuan Yin is perched on a pedestal in the garden.

Al fresco dining, incidentally, is always an ideal option in Baguio's cool weather but more so because of Salud's landscaped garden, which features a fountain and an outdoor mural by Kawayan de Guia.

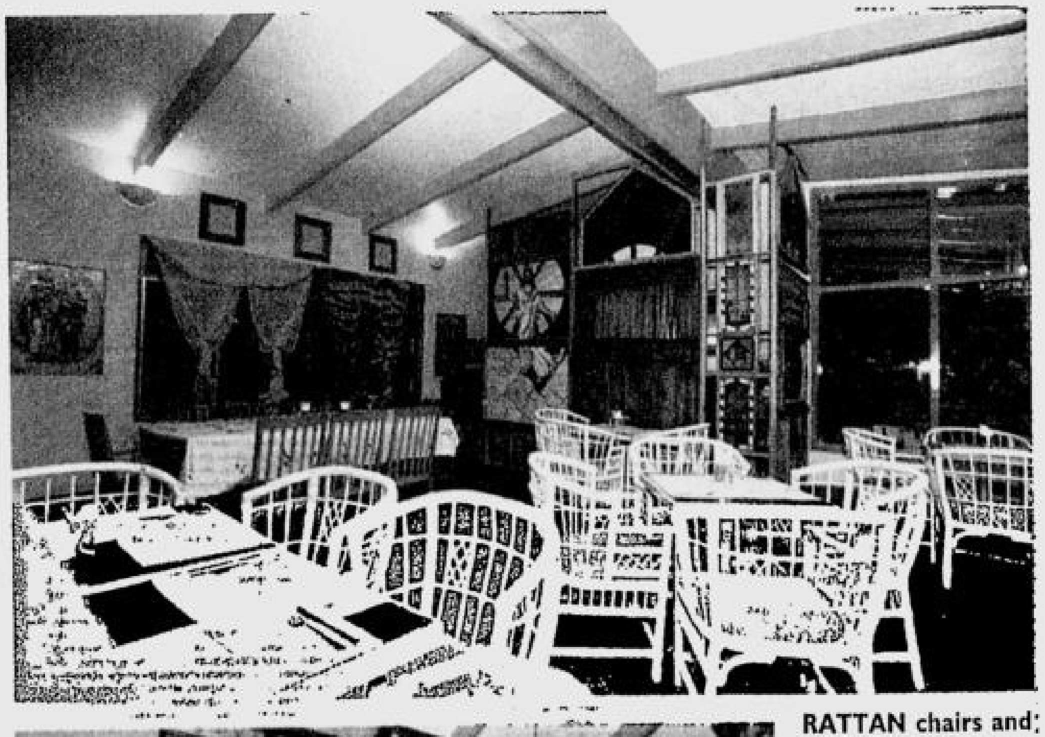
Delicious food and interesting surroundings definitely mix.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



SALUD'S colorful and eclectic interior

SEAFOOD risotto topped with squid meat and mussels, and flavored with parsley and cilantro on saffron-based broth.



RATTAN chairs and draped sari curtains make for an interesting mix.

AL fresco dining by the fountain

HUSBAND-AND-WIFE team Paul and Nina Poblador

TASTEMAKERS

Pinoy resto turns 18, gives treat to 18-year-olds

GOTO King celebrates its 18th year on May 24. To share its success with diners, Goto King will have an anniversary promo called "Balik-bayad."

With this promo, Goto Regular and Tokwa't Baboy Combo will be priced at P18. To avail of this promo, diners must be 18 years old. Proof of age will be required. This combo meal was offered at this price 18 years ago when the first Goto King outlets were opened.

Starting as a cart inside SM Cubao Food Court in 1984 serving *goto, lugaw, pospas* and *arroz caldo*, the food brand is now in all SM Food Courts (which include Cebu but not Manila) as well as Ali Mall, Tutuban Center Mall and Festival Mall. Cater King operates three Goto King stand-alone outlets in Kamias Edsa, Philcoa and Park Square II.

GERRY'S Grill opened its newest branch at Waterfront Road in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. When it hosted "Inihaw Fest at the Beach" March 23-31, Gerry's grilled delights were served and beer came aplenty with San Miguel Beer as co-sponsor for the event.

ROBINSONS Land Corp., operator of the Robinsons chain of shopping malls, and the Nestle Food Services recently signed a memorandum of agreement making Nestea the official iced tea in all nine Robinsons Food Courts all over the country. Shown during the contract signing are (from left) Cathy Carmona, Nestle key accounts specialist for mall operations; Eunice Gonzales, Robinsons ad and promo director; Tommy Lee 0, Robinsons Land VP for complex administration; and Richard Penalosa, assistant brand manager for the Nestle Food Services unit.

Today's lesson . . .

from page D4

"Happy Birthday." The rest of us nibbled at and tasted a tall Tiramisu cake (an American cake with some mascarpone), and a giant Fudge Brownie à la mode, lavishly walnut-sprinkled. The menu warns: "Our desserts are huge, and meant for sharing."

Burgoo is a restaurant in which American tastes, appetites and the Americanized tastes of many Filipinos will find a home. The young, bred on Americana by popular culture (movies, magazines, TV, comics, etc.) also find it compatible with their current tastes (there was a full house on that weekday lunchtime, despite malfunctioning elevators).

American inputs

I learned quite a few things from revisiting Burgoo. One was that American inputs define quite a lot of our popular food choices, not only burgers and fries, but pastas and pizzas, steaks and chops, salads and pies, and also nachos and chimichangas, deep-fried onion rings and Buffalo Chicken Wings.

From Mari, Carlo and Marite, I learned again the pleasure principle. Food was created to be enjoyed, savored and shared. One may create the process of one's pleasure. Is it best to dive in, "seize the day," and let tomorrow take care of itself? Or should one, as Mari did, eat slowly and meditatively, with balance in mind, and a clear ending, in which "you can see forever"? We elders must think of our limitations and prohibitions, but the young can see food pleasure as natural, God-given and guilt-free.

As Carlo, Mari and Marite agreed, we will be back. I will probably try the new Seafood Caesar Supreme that Albert recommended. And I have no doubt that Carlo will skydive with joy into yet another burger.

MARI Peña had grilled lamb chops and corn on the cob.

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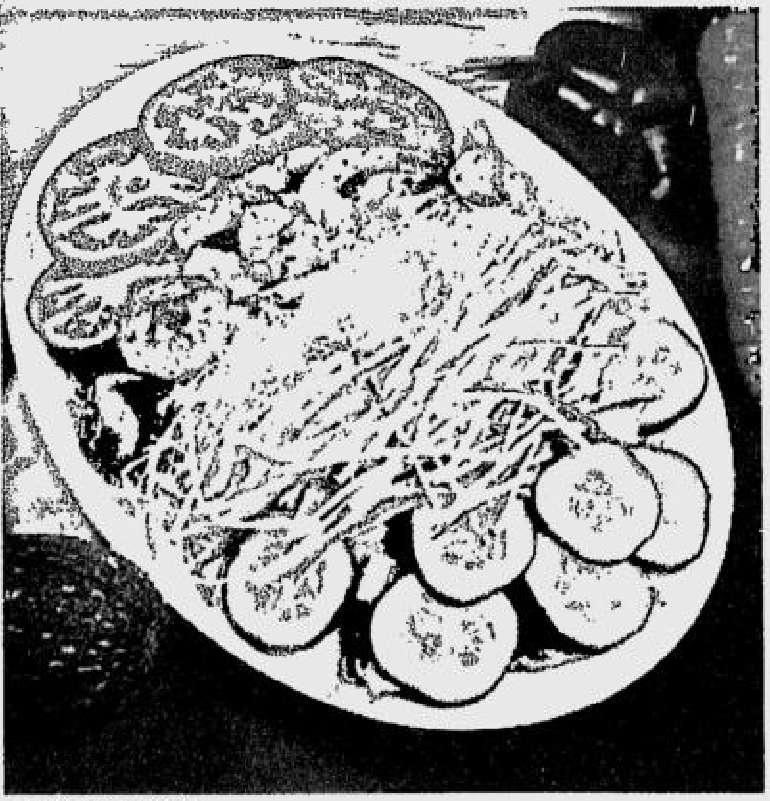
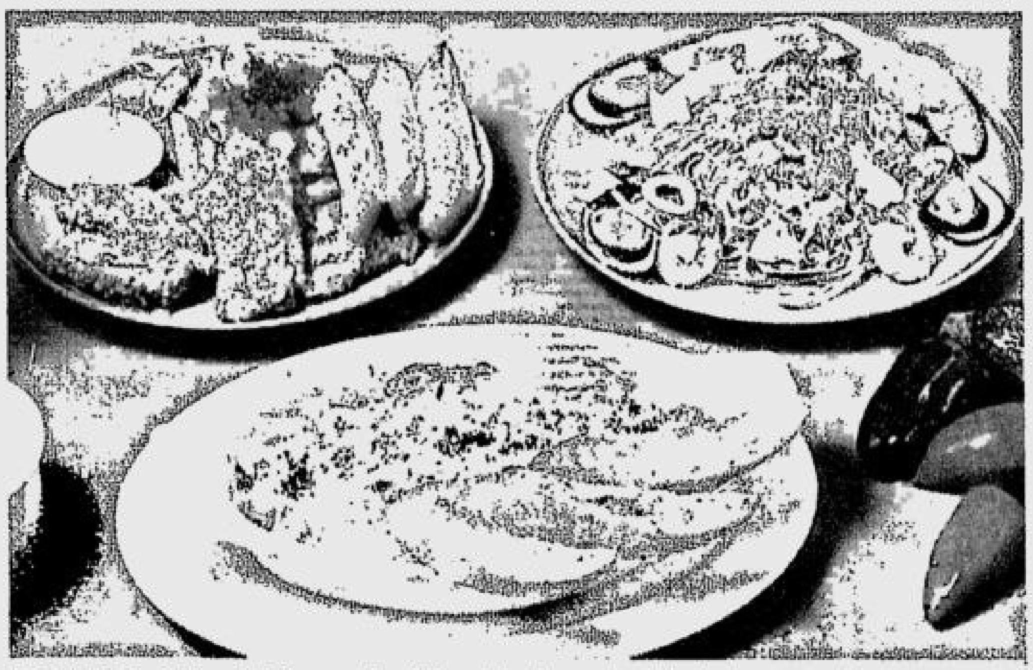


SEAFOOD Salad

> Is it best to dive in, 'seize the day,' and let tomorrow take care of itself? Or should one eat slowly and meditatively, with balance in mind, and a clear ending, in which 'you can see forever'?



FROM TOP. Friday fish fry, seafood linguini, cheezy beef baked macaroni

Today's lesson: Anything goes

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

THE MENU cover for its new branch lines up images of mush rooms, herbs, onions, tomatoes, extra-virgin olive oil, aged cheese, green and orange noodles, large garlic cloves, a prawn and two kinds of clams. What kind of restaurant would that indicate? Why, American, of course, from the melting pot of cultures.

Burgoo has now opened its third branch (at the 2/L The Podium, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong; tel. 687-5254), after those in Makati (3/L Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center; tel. 898-1815 to -17) and the original in Quezon City (310 Tomas Morato Ext., South Triangle, Diliman; tel. 927-7424/7384/7396). And yet, surprisingly, it is not a link in a chain, nor a multinational outpost, but a stand-alone, corporation-owned restaurant with an American dream, conceptualized and managed by Albert Alavera.

The name "Burgoo" comes from an American stew of various meats (chicken, beef, pork, even venison if you have it) and vegetables (carrots, green onions, green beans, zucchini, corn and others), with a straightforward American flavor, a distant cousin to the Italian minestrone. A serving of Burgoo is more than a soup; it is a meal in itself.

Familiar and unfamiliar

Because this was the kind of restaurant that would challenge the young, with items familiar and unfamiliar, I took along my team of reviewers-in-training: Mari and Carlo Peña, 11 and 10 years old respectively, and Marite, whose fifth birthday it was. Carlo waxed enthusiastic about the bottomless iced tea—and learned his lesson. Too much of it filled him up so that he could not finish his Hamburgoo—a mixture of choice chicken, beef and pork blended with herbs and seasoning, served with caramelized onions, Monterey Jack cheese and tomatoes in a sesame bun.

Mari was totally happy with rosemary-marinated grilled lamb chops, but he could not quite finish them, and had to ask his Mommy and Papa for help. Mommy Reena had a Friday Fish Fry, and Papa Mario the pork chops, which looked temptingly grill-marked in the illustrated menu. My nurse Winnie, had Linguini with Clams (large, fresh), and I, a small burger (one patty instead of Carlo's two), perfectly charbroiled, and served only with a lettuce leaf, caramelized onions and a pickle or two. Marite had a slim, dainty mini-pizza from the children's menu.

But the fries were spectacular—not piled as high as they are in all American restaurants (including the food chains and multinationals with branches here)—but wonderfully flavored, whether plain, cheddar cheese, or sour cream and onion.

By dessert time, Carlo had recovered from his iced-tea binge, and was ready for a chocolate sundae. Judicious Mari, having balanced his meal sensibly throughout, finished his sundae; Carlo couldn't. Because it was Marite's birthday, Albert gave her a mini-sundae with one candle, and a choir of waiters to sing-

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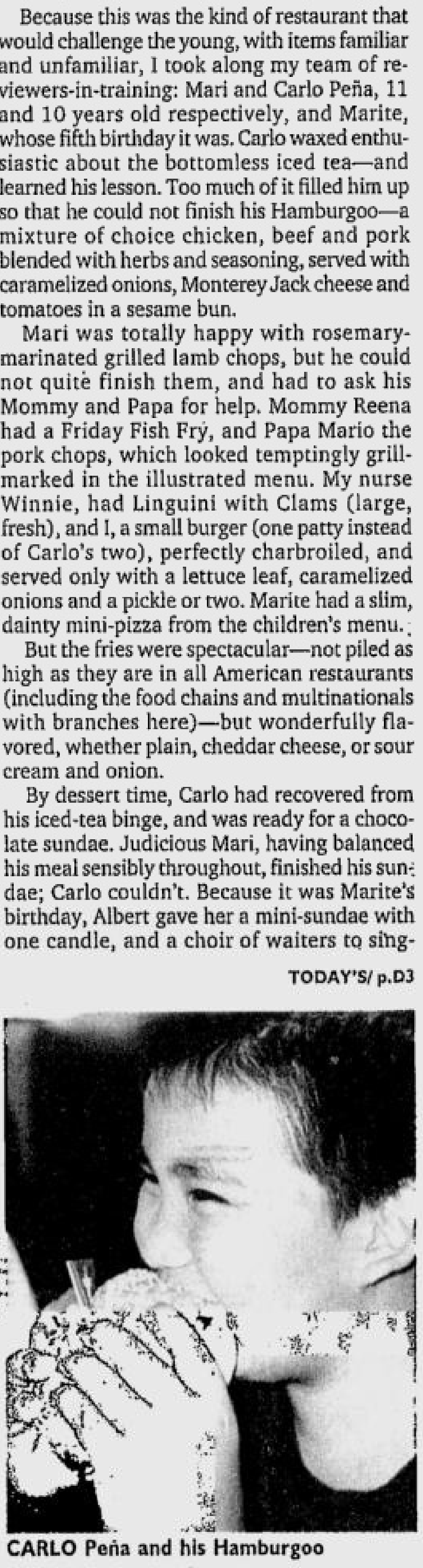

CARLO Peña and his Hamburgoo

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